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Appointment on fixed-term contract to end
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Between Euclid and the elves

By Mark Girouard

Lutyens: The Work of the English Architect 1869-1914
Hayward Gallery
Catalogue 200pp. Arts Council of Great Britain. £7.75 at the exhibition, otherwise £15.
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RODERICK GRADIDGE:
Edwin Lutyens
Architect Laureate
In 70pp. George Allen and Unwin. £13.95.
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MARGARET RICHARDSON:
Lutyens and the Sea Captain
About 44 unnumbered pages. Scholar Press. £4.95 until December 31, then £5.95.
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ROBERT GRANT IRVING:
Indian Summer
Lutyens, Baker, and Imperial Delhi
406pp. Yale University Press. £20.
0 300 02422 3

LAWRENCE WEAVER:
Houses and Gardens by E. L. Lutyens
344pp. Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club. £19.50.
0 902028 98 7

Architecture has long been the despair of the media. Buildings (on the whole) cannot move or be moved. Trying to film them is bad enough, exhibiting them is even worse. Producers of films on architecture have tended to rely on putting TV personalities on the screen in ever-changing gear, to afford relief to those boring old buildings. Exhibitions of any size have been few and far between, have tended to rely on architect's drawings and blown-up photographs, and have seldom been well attended. The Palladio exhibition, which came to England from Italy in 1975, extended the range of exhibits into three dimensions by its lavish use of architectural models; even so it never quite came alive. Some of the exhibitions at the RIBA's little Heinz Gallery in Portman Square have made stimulating experiments in new methods of presentation, but by the nature of the gallery they could only do so on a modest scale. On the whole, architecture has done best when it has formed part of a larger exhibition, as in the Hayward's *Art in*

Revolution (on the art of the Russian Revolution) in 1971, or the V & A's *Victorian Church Art* in 1971-72. The Lutyens exhibition currently on show at the Hayward makes history as the first big exhibition to project an architect in a convincing and enjoyable way. Inside the concrete cage of the Hayward it has created a complete Lutyens world, using the spaces and changes of level of the gallery, but effectively disguising its architecture (which Lutyens would surely have loathed). But it conceals architecture with more architecture: each of the main spaces is given an architectural character which evokes the contrasting characters of the different episodes in Lutyens' career, starting with the scrubbed oak beams and picturesque brickwork of his Surrey beginnings, and ending with the formal grandeur of Liverpool Cathedral and New Delhi. Timber arcades, brick fireplaces and floors, classical piers and doorcases, coved or vaulted ceilings, and other architectural details copied from or inspired by Lutyens' own work are brilliantly used to create the appropriate settings, within which drawings, photographs, furniture, books, letters, sketches, personal relics and a succession of models of individual buildings combine to entertain and inform the visitor. Even the fire-doors have been given a Lutyens styling.

Such a transformation is not cheap. The exhibition has cost well in excess of £100,000 and would never have taken place in the form it has if the exhibition committee (and especially its chairman, Colin Amery) had not raised the money to fill what the catalogue preface calls "the gap between the ambitions of the committee and the resources of the Arts Council". But money, however essential, would not of itself have been enough, without the knowledge, panache and flair contributed by the designer of the exhibition, Piers Gough, and the rest of the committee.

So much for the exhibition, but what about its subject? Why spend over £100,000 on Lutyens, in preference to any other architect? Partly, without doubt, because Lutyens has come into fashion in a big way in the last few years, especially in America where he is the in-figure among American architects disillusioned with the Modern Movement. In addition, unlike many architects, who submerged themselves in their work and are hard to present as individuals, he is an obvious "personality", whose irrepressible facetiousness irritated some as much as it delighted others, and survives in the exhibition in the endless visual jokes, puns, stories and games which he drew all through his career. He designed furniture and fittings which, unlike his buildings, can be brought to the Hayward. He had a very large output, and there are strong contrasts between the work of different periods of his career. And he is closely bound up with two current objects of nostalgia, the country house and the British Empire.

But beyond the accidents of fashion or convenience lies the belief that Lutyens is one of the world's great architects. "In his lifetime", as Christopher Hussey put it, "he was widely held to be our greatest architect since Wren if not, as many maintained, his superior." Hussey's superb and sympathetic biography of Lutyens (published in 1950) set out to establish him as "the last great architect of the age of humanism". Already in 1931, Robert Byron had told readers that "a great architect, of the calibre of Bernini, Mansard and Wren, is working in their midst." These formidable claims, zealously propagated by *Country Life* in Lutyens' own lifetime and preserved by a small but influential group of admirers during the high peak of the Modern Movement, have been enthusiastically restated by a new generation of architects and architectural historians in the last few years.

Literature to support or illustrate these claims is now becoming available in increasing quantities. The exhibition has sparked off something of a Lutyens industry in the publishing world. As an advance guard in 1980 came Peter Inskip's monograph and Mary Lutyens's moving and revealing study of her father. This year's crop includes the exhibition catalogue itself, richly illustrated, packed with information, and containing essays by Mary Lutyens, Jane Brown, John Cornforth, Gavin Stamp and John Summerson. Roderick Gradidge perceptively analyses a selection of Lutyens buildings. Margaret Richardson (whose catalogue

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Of Lutyens's intense seriousness as an architect there can be no doubt. His facetiousness may have concealed but never impeded his total dedication to his craft. He set out to compete with and equal the architectural giants of the past. Architecture dominated his life, nearly ruined his marriage, and left him a comparatively poor man.

Charges that he was superficial, a clever showman who would put on an act in whatever style entertained his clients, do not bear looking into. Granted the accidents of the place and time of birth, his career developed on a consistent course. His Surrey childhood and youth, his training under Ernest George and his early friendship with and hero-worship of Gertrude Jekyll set him in orbit in the world of the vernacular revival, of enthusiasm for country crafts and country ways and suspicion of all cities except garden ones. It is doubtful how deeply this bit with Lutyens. He lived all his working life in London houses and in spite of a good deal of talk about "a little white house" in the country never came anywhere near buying or building it. His London garden was neglected, and he refused to allow flowers inside his own houses. Mary Lutyens describes his urban dress at country-house weekends and comments "I cannot see him in country clothes and doubt whether he ever wore them." Vegetation and trees

(except of the most formal variety) play little part in his architectural drawings; even the dream house which he drew for Emily Lytton when he was courting her rises stark, clean and unreciprocated out of the ground. The exhibition catalogue reproduces a childhood drawing by him not of flowers or country cottages but a "design for a twin-screw engine for torpedo-boats and launches." Its intersecting wheels and pistons suggest the geometric intersections of many of his later designs; geometry, one suspects, always meant more to him than nature. Even in Munstead Wood, in the central shrine of his Surrey vernacular period, what Lawrence Weaver captions as a "fireplace in farm-house manner" is in fact a highly sophisticated exercise in contrasting and intersecting curves, infinitely removed in spirit from the work of vernacular craftsmen. (It has been re-created in the first room of the Hayward exhibition.)

Lutyens's fascination with geometry developed side by side with an interest in exploiting architecture as a stylistic language, and increasingly with exploiting the richest and longest lived language of all, that of the classical orders. Of his amazing inventiveness in both fields, exhibition and books provide abundant evidence. With apparently inexhaustible ease he could set curves playing against other curves, or intersect spheres with prisms, or prisms with each other. He could take a Georgian hipped-roof manor, a rusticated doorcase, an oriel window or an arrow-slit and by changes in position, proportion or material re-create them in new and unexpected forms. As Goodhart-Rendel put it, "in many doorways, chimney-pieces and bits of furniture of Lutyens's design one meets the sudden unanalysable felicity that makes one catch one's breath."

Lutyens's extraordinary talents are undeniable but they were accompanied by, and to some extent stimulated, weaknesses which seriously hindered him in his dedicated search for architectural greatness. Cleverness has its own dangers; it is too tempting to show it off. Lutyens had an almost infinite gift for playing both with words and images, the kind of wit that enabled him to draw a few strokes and transform the

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armorial letter-head of the P & O into a ferocious tiger or in reference to his unsuccessful dispute with his colleague Herbert Baker to make his determination to show how he can transform old formulas becomes a little whimsical, in architecture as well as on paper. And along with a sometimes facile cleverness goes a certain lack of strength that expresses itself in too much proliferation, too much cutting up of shapes. Lindisfarne Castle is praised in the Haywards catalogue for its "massive abstract qualities", but it is instructive to compare it with the original castle as drawn by C. R. Mackintosh a few years before Lutyens began to work on it, the massive abstract qualities were there already, and Lutyens softened and toned them down rather than strengthened them.

Lutyens himself was increasingly aware of this weakness. He was always trying to discipline himself to achieve greater simplicity and strength. But he was not equipped by nature to build in the grand manner, however desperately he desired to do so. The medium-sized country houses of his thirties probably represented the scale most naturally suited to his talents and are the most obviously enjoyable of his creations. His design for the London County Hall competition of 1907 shows that a very large building was still beyond him. Then, in 1912, he had his great breakthrough, when first the New Delhi plan and then the Viceroy's House came his way.

It is hard to see the Viceroy's House as the triumph lauded by Lutyens's admirers. It has its amazing moments, above all the double horizontal line of the upper and lower colonnades, stretching without a break across the 1,000 feet of the east front and its wings. In these, and in the superbly vigorous modelling of the stonework above and between them, Lutyens at last attained the sublime. After that wonderful upper cornice nothing more was needed. But Lutyens lost his nerve; so simple and unqualified a statement was beyond him. Out of the centre projects his idiotic dome, that totally unconvincing symbol of the majesty of the Raj, accompanied by other unnecessary embellishments in the jelly-mould style of the period.

Lutyens (unlike his admirers) was never happy with the dome; he even, in one inspired response to a call for economy, suggested that it and the Durbar Hall below it should be omitted altogether. But the dome was not his only failure at Delhi. A plan on the scale of the Viceroy's House was beyond him; in spite of some grand moments it is uninventive in the centre and muddled at the extremities. The even vaster planning of New Delhi itself was further beyond his powers. Compared to the inspired Chicago professionalism of Burnham in Washington or Burley Griffin in Canberra, it is amateurish and incompetent. The new city fails to relate to the old one, and the grand vista of King's Way to the rest of the new city. The endless roundabouts are endlessly confusing. Even the grand vista is not as grand as it ought to be. This is due less to the famous and disastrous extinction of the Viceroy's House by the slope of the final hill than to its narrowing beyond its ironwork grilles and the empty formalities of Viceroy's Court. It completely fails to dominate the city as it was meant to. If the city as a whole succeeds in symbolizing anything it is not grandeur, still less humanity, but rather government totally divorced from ordinary people. As such it is perhaps England's most disastrous legacy to independent India.

Of course New Delhi was not entirely due to Lutyens. No doubt he was hamstrung by colleagues, committees and governments. Even so he must share responsibility for the failures of New Delhi, which relate to a weakness in him as an architect more basic than anything yet referred to. Almost all accounts of him stress his childlike or boyish qualities, using phrases such as "impetuous schoolboy" (Osbert Sitwell) "part schoolboy" (Lord Halifax) and "gay child" (Harold Nicolson). His friend E. V. Lucas described him as "still an eternal child - a minister of childish nonsense". Lord protect us from our friends, one might say, but Lutyens had a somewhat distressing habit of talking about himself in the same way, and cast himself in a child-like, or partly child-like role in some of his most meaningful relationships, especially with older women. In his early manhood he himself confessed that he enjoyed writing "as a child" to his "beloved Baa-Lamb" Barbara Webb - "so much easier than as something of this world's 38 years old". During the blissful year of his engagement to Emily Lytton they referred to each other as children, and it seems likely that this was initiated by him rather than by Emily; she called him "my

ted altogether. But the dome was not his only failure at Delhi. A plan on the scale of the Viceroy's House was beyond him; in spite of some grand moments it is uninventive in the centre and muddled at the extremities. The even vaster planning of New Delhi itself was further beyond his powers. Compared to the inspired Chicago professionalism of Burnham in Washington or Burley Griffin in Canberra, it is amateurish and incompetent. The new city fails to relate to the old one, and the grand vista of King's Way to the rest of the new city. The endless roundabouts are endlessly confusing. Even the grand vista is not as grand as it ought to be. This is due less to the famous and disastrous extinction of the Viceroy's House by the slope of the final hill than to its narrowing beyond its ironwork grilles and the empty formalities of Viceroy's Court. It completely fails to dominate the city as it was meant to. If the city as a whole succeeds in symbolizing anything it is not grandeur, still less humanity, but rather government totally divorced from ordinary people. As such it is perhaps England's most disastrous legacy to independent India.

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On his voyages to and from India - where he made nineteen visits in connection with the building of New Delhi - Lutyens always (as a government official) sailed on the P & O line. He often incorporated its letter headings, differently each time, in his illustrations when writing to his wife and children. In the drawing above, reproduced from the catalogue of the Lutyens Exhibition reviewed here, the Company's flags and emblem make the tiger's face. "Viverrations" was Lutyens's word for light-hearted occupations such as this.

sweetest little boy-man", he described himself as "your little boy mate". When their marriage began to run into difficulties he apologized for his "spirit of childish wilfulness" and suggested that Emily "take me by the hand as though I was a little child". In 1917 his beloved Gertrude Jekyll "treats him like a child", according to Lady Sackville, the intimate friend and possibly mistress of his later years. He wrote love letters to Lady Sackville in baby language and she treated him like a pet; he was "such a good little McNed and so fluffy"; she was continually "sending him to his basket".

All this aspect of his private life, along with the jokes, puns and facetiousness that were so publicly apparent, may be explained as the surface armour of a shy man, or a means of relieving the strains endured by a creative one. But it is tempting to wonder whether they went deeper, to try to place him in the strange, embarrassing and as yet little explored world of late Victorian and Edwardian whimsicality, of the cult of Pan and the child, of J. M. Barrie and Peter Pan, who wants always to be a little boy and to have fun. Barrie was one of Lutyens's best friends, and Lutyens designed the sets for the first production of *Peter Pan*.

This is difficult and unfamiliar territory for an architectural histo-

rian. It involves the vexed question of the relationship between an architect's work and his personality and calls for subjective judgments with which many will disagree. But it is arguable that in some ways Lutyens was emotionally undeveloped, and that this lack of development seriously affected his work as an architect.

Hussey was perceptive about this aspect of Lutyens, although he gave it a different and much more complimentary explanation. He wrote of "the existence, behind the laughable, lovable facade, beyond the abounding inventiveness, of something morose, austere, as icy as Euclid". Lutyens's ultimate allegiance, he thought, was not to the human needs of his clients, but to "certain abstract and, as he was convinced, eternal values transcending moral considerations". His son Robert saw this as "the fundamental integrity of the artist, unmoved in the last resort by sympathy or charity, dispassionate and authoritarian". It is tempting, however, to interpret it in terms of weakness rather than strength, of a failure of the understanding which meant, for instance, that however vividly he projected his imagination into the life to be lived in his houses, he was always to some extent "playing house" rather than designing for the real needs of real people. There is a curious unreality about many of

his buildings, in spite of their brilliance. From this viewpoint his absorption in the creation of the Queen's doll's house becomes significant, as does his famous description of classical architecture as "the great game". New Delhi was the greatest game of all, played with complete dedication and a total failure to envisage it as an actual city where people would live and work.

There was, however, one work in which Lutyens transcended his limitations. His design for Liverpool Cathedral was the darling of his last years. It was never built beyond the crypt, but at least a very large model of it was made, and is the wonder of the Hayward exhibition. Here his preoccupations with geometry and abstract form, with the reinterpretation of old themes and with the classical language of architecture fuse perfectly together. The rather childish ingenuities and jelly-mould profiles of his Thiepval arch have been developed and enlarged to produce a complex but ordered whole. The vast cliff-like facades, fretted away above and dug into below, and the lonely adelicules and silhouetted columns that articulate its upper peaks, are intensely moving. Alas, it was Lutyens's clients, not Lutyens himself, who lost their nerve; it is a sadly derelict silhouette which now crowns the slopes of Brownlow Hill.

The proliferating periphery

By J. M. Richards

ARTHUR M. EDWARDS:

The Design of Suburbia
A critical study in environmental history
281pp. Pimbridge Press Ltd., 16
Pimbridge Road, London W11 3HL.
£16.50.
0 86206 002 8

The only serious weakness of this otherwise excellent, wise and informative book is that it uses the word suburbia to mean too many different things. In some passages Arthur M. Edwards's suburbs are simply the fringes of towns where sporadic growth has taken place, not excluding the ribbon development one house thick along the roads leading out of towns which caused such disfigurement of the English countryside until it was curbed by the Act of 1935. In some passages he means by suburbs the by-law streets, often near the centre rather than on the fringe, with which municipalities replaced the slum, as one of individual owners following the Public Health Act of 1875. In most others he means the low-density housing estates that are the present century's characteristic contribution to the English pattern of living - what in fact most people mean by suburbs. These last were initially a product of the speculative house-builder, but Mr Edwards also brings into his story the post-war new towns, in spite of their having been conceived as a response to an urban policy that created the new towns that they should not be suburbs in the dictionary

sense of dependencies of towns but self-contained communities.

The low-density extension of a town into the countryside, whether resulting from new forms of transport, from popular ambition to achieve more genteel or healthier living habits or from the enterprise of speculative house-builders, does not necessarily constitute a suburb in the true sense of a self-sufficient entity that provides within its boundaries all the requirements of daily life except those concerned with earning a living. Edwards's examination of suburbia would have been clearer and more constructive had he acknowledged that it has its own distinct and specialized attributes and is neither the town spread thin nor the countryside built up.

The true suburb, as distinguished from a mere tract of land given over to housing, caters for a section of the population with needs and aspirations different from those of the townsman and the countryman - needs arising from young families life and from the suburban dweller's attitude to leisure, to his neighbour and to the rest of the community. In fulfilling these needs the suburb evolved its own physical pattern in which the houses themselves - and Edwards is mainly concerned with housing - were not the dominating element. They were one element among many; and in the mature suburban scene are barely glimpsed among an elaboration of gardens, trees and outdoor furnishings of various kinds - appearing and disappearing round corners of the winding roads.

This kind of scenic elaboration is unique to suburbia, for there the tradition of the English Picturesque landscape still has its natural home,

and its effects are created very largely by the united efforts of its inhabitants, each diligently exploiting the varied opportunities that the suburban ethos offers him. The process is as much one of chance as of design. The typical suburban scene is an accumulation of happy accidents, and it is thus misleading to speak of the ideal suburb as being designed in the sense that a square in a Georgian town or a neighbourhood in a contemporary new town were consciously designed as a preliminary to being built. There lies another anomaly in Edwards's title.

It is true that many suburbs do not display more than a hint of the richly overladen environment which those to whom neither town nor country life is perfectly suited revel in if they are fortunate; this needs time to establish and in recent decades the rule-of-thumb regulations introduced as part of the developing system of planning controls or to ease the flow of traffic, and determining road-widths and sight-lines (regulations that Edwards duly castigates), have broken open the closed-in world in which the suburban ethos once flourished. Yet although its charms may be partly nostalgic, a picture of the suburb in its rare maturity is the one those attempting to elucidate the essential quality of suburbia should always carry in their minds.

Edwards cast his net wider, and any confusion as to the proper characteristics of suburbia is fully compensated for by the breadth of his historical survey. *The Design of Suburbia* is really a history of housing policies and housing legislation since the eighteenth century, omitting only the high-density central-area housing that has been the most prominent contribution to our

cities in this generation, and the middle-class flats that were nearly as prominent a contribution of the generation before. This is a readable account, full of acute observation, into which the social and the legislative elements are skilfully woven. Edwards is very good on causes of change such as the motor car, showing first how it influenced the spread of towns by allowing commuter traffic to develop away from the railway, and then its aesthetic influence, when it diluted the densely built-up texture of the earlier suburbs by means of the new road-patterns on which motor-traffic insisted, and for example by inserting driveways leading to garages into the previously continuous lines of hedges that bordered the roads and enclosed the secluded gardens.

He is also good on administrative influences - especially the negative: the impossibly wide range of talents demanded of the local authority surveyors who were placed in such a powerful position as a consequence of the Act of 1875, and the abdication by the architectural profession from all responsibility for suburban housing after the RIBA's new Code of Practice in 1920 forbade architects to be involved in housing finance as they had effectively been since early in the nineteenth century.

Edwards has some revealing passages also on social history, in which he analyses, for example, the snobbery that made semi-detached houses preferable to terraces because of the latter's association with working-class housing, in spite of the fact that the upper classes in Belgrave and the Bloomsbury squares lived in terraces. He also notes the significant class differences between the London omnibus, which

in its early days was essentially a middle-class conveyance (it did not start operating until eight in the morning, by which time the lower classes were at work) and the tram, which was the working-class vehicle. West End property interests managed to keep trams out of the centre of London, which they did not touch until they reached its below ground by way of the Kingsway tunnel early in the twentieth century. Even outside the centre trams were mostly confined to the working-class suburbs.

One would have liked more about housing densities, especially in relation to the particular style of living, for which the suburb caters and the style of landscape it creates. Edwards makes it clear that the low densities of the post-war planned extension of housing by means of the suburban estates of speculative builders and municipal authorities or of the new towns built by specially appointed corporations, were as much due to miscalculations about population growth on the part of Abercrombie and other planners as any popular preference for the cottage type of house. In fact the slum dwellers exported to the new towns sadly missed to begin with the sense of neighbourhood inherent in close-packed urban streets and tenements. There is no discussion of the pros and cons of housing, as an element in suburban housing, and Edwards seems to assume that a suburb - unlike the traditional country town - must by definition be of low density, even when it might be preserved for agriculture. It would have been interesting if he had set out the arguments on which this assumption is founded.

Another who would conserve a treasured fragment of capitalism is Arthur Dignaturo in "Alienation and Justice in the Market". His essay is a genuinely Marxist exercise in turning economics into a moral science, and its main drive is to demonstrate what a useless collection of parasites capitalists really are. His argument takes off from Joan Robinson's observation that there is an important difference between returns to capital and profits for capitalists, but it ends up taking radical thought back to about 1820, when it was the parasitism of the upper classes that most impressed the socialists of the day. Dignaturo's main concern, however, is to salvage the market, which has sometimes been thrown out with the bath-water by over-hasty theorists. "Not the market", he tells us, "but class structure and class determined technological misdevelopment, are responsible for alienated labour".

The most radical of all these revisionists is Lawrence Crocker, who makes it clear in his essay on "Marx,

JOHN P. BURKE, LAWRENCE CROCKER, LYMAN H. LEGTERS (Editors):
Marxism and the Good Society
225pp. Cambridge University Press.
£16.
0 521 23392 5

The good society is a vision that has danced before men's eyes since well before the Greeks. But quite what sort of vision it is has seldom been agreed. For Plato, it was an illuminating intellectual construction, for Marx it would be the virtually inevitable outcome of a revolutionary process, while for many moderns, it is a blueprint to be actualized, an invitation to social engineering. But is it a constitution within which changing generations of human beings might live? Or is it a concrete way of life inhabited by people who lack only capacity for founting things up? Again, is it one way of life on which all humans will come to agree? Or are there many versions of the good society, often with little else but their supposed goodness in common?

Some of these questions are raised in the opening essay of this collection by Richard T. de George. He is clear that the good society is a different thing from a good society, of which there could be many versions. Marx clearly believed in the former. Professor George asks if this vision is still "viable" and concludes that it is not, and that contemporary communists have been realistic in settling for attempting to create the conditions of a good society. By contrast, John O. Burke argues that Marx believed that a revolutionary process was a necessary furnace in which men fit to inhabit the future good society would have to be forged. His argument requires him to discount all those *obiter dicta* in which Marx and Engels said that some countries (such as Britain and America) might advance to worker power without actually undergoing a revolution. His argument is convincing, and makes clear a point which is not otherwise prominent in these essays: that you cannot have a good society without transforming human nature; and such transformation might well be a long and bloody business.

Hence George's argument that it is better to settle for a good society is a sensible one. And in being sensible, it is typical of most of the essays in this collection, which can be described as "revisionist" in the sense that they seek to reintroduce into the Marxist ideal those characteristics of modern (capitalist) society which a liberal would recognize as being valuable. The point about George's acceptance of moral pluralism is that different people have different ideas of what would constitute a good society. Given this, political life becomes (as it in fact now is) not a matter of bringing about "the good society" as if it were a blueprint to be implemented, but of finding ways to accommodate different views of our current imperfections.

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Blueprints for paradise

By Kenneth Minogue

liberty and democracy" that the good society will be a perpetual adult education class in which self-realization will take the form of an all-round development of everyone's capacities. The feature of the present world which seems most to dismay Professor Crocker is the existence of status-hierarchies, and this makes him alarmed at the thought of brilliant concert pianists enjoying applause at the end of their performances, for "even a non-hereditary status elite is a threat to a left libertarian community, because it destroys feelings of equality of worth". His ideal is one of everybody exercising skills at an equal level of competence, but he regretfully concludes that such an outcome is unlikely. His inspiration is found in a sentence from *The German Idealists*: "Only in a community do the means exist for every individual to cultivate his talents in all directions." It is this vision of, as it were, self-developers gulping off in all directions at once that gives one a strong sense of unreality in talk about the good society, the objection to which can be best expressed by saying that everything we do has an opportunity cost.

It is Crocker's essay which exhibits most clearly the land-of-Cockaigne charm permeating many of these essays. Leaving far behind him the problems of power and scarcity, he suggests that revolutionary leaders should retire to their ploughs when the revolution is over. "The one party that should not exist after the revolution is the party that is identified in people's minds with the revolution... Anyone perceived as a leader in the process of the revolution should retire from politics with the success of the revolution." It's a lovely thought, but what does he think the Lenins, Maos, Castros and their like are in the game for? The revolution is never finished, there's always more work to be done.

David McLellan contributes a characteristically lucid piece on "Marx and Engels on the future communist society". As he notes, Marx thought that "Hegel saw man as a disembodied consciousness and the world as necessarily inimical to man's fulfillment", a caricature of Hegel which is necessary if Marx's comments on him are to make sense. Crocker describes the position of the Praxis Marxists of Yugoslavia, who fit well into the volume because of their receptivity to liberal ideas, which they graft with dialectical flexibility on to the main stem of Marxist thought. Other essays touch on contemporary communist reality, but it is a very light touch. Loren Graham describes "the questioning of science and technology" now developing in the Soviet Union, while Paul Sweezy argues that the most important contribution Maoism made to the advance of Marxism was to break the tyranny of the Soviet model: "Postrevolutionary society contains not only contradictions inherited from millennia of a class-riven society" but also "it produces and reproduces its own contradictions", making it all the more necessary, one thinks, as one remembers Crocker's suggestion, for the fathers of the revolution to find reasons for continuing to guide their children.

This is, then, a better than average collection of essays, usually sensible, certainly liberal, mostly well written. Yet there is something wrong with the whole project, and it is instructive to consider what it is. A good society is clearly compatible with bad men and good men with a bad society. This is a crucial distinction, but it is never made in these essays. The reason is that the essays have all sundered the idea of the good society from any idea of choice. A good society means, here, a society in which people characterized by a good communal nature could allow that nature to flow freely into a concrete mode of social life. There is no risk of evil, for these are special people: communal puppets controlled by the invisible strings of Marxist exegesis.

They must, indeed, be very special people to enjoy living in such a society. For the character of human life up till now has been the enormous variety of ideas people have entertained of what the good society might be like. For pensioners, it's weeding the rose-garden, for hell's angels, it's taking fearful risks zooming along motorways. Spaniards will still be wanting the bullfights that vegetarians and the enemies of bloodsports will wish to abolish. These and a thousand other disputes will have to be settled before anyone could even think of setting up the good society. But, for these essays, it will all become possible by consent on the far side of something called a revolution.

But the problem goes even deeper than this, and it can best be elaborated if we refer to the famous passage in John Donne's seventeenth devotion which has often been used to state the kind of ideal to which the essayists of this work subscribe: No man is an island, and the bell that tolls tolls for us all. This last, why they all went into the dark? There is something terrifying about the banality of evil. But even more terrifying would be the banality of good. In *Contemporary Terror: Studies in Sub-State Violence* (231pp. Macmillan, £20, 0 333 27207 2), David Carlton and Carlo Schaefer have assembled papers presented at the International School on Disarmament and Research on Conflicts held in Arica, Italy, in August 1978. Among the aspects of international terrorism considered are Nuclear Violence, Chinese and Soviet Attitudes, and Hostage-Taking, together with case-studies of Federal Germany, Italy, Ulster and the IRA.

Men have died in their millions in pursuit of some vision of the good society. Kulak and bourgeois, Cuban and Cambodian, guerrilla and terrorist, and their victims. Can this be why they all went into the dark? There is something terrifying about the banality of evil. But even more terrifying would be the banality of good.

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Now it would indeed be perverse to try to organize affliction to facilitate the moral uplift of the inhabitants of some notional good society. Life usually does that well enough for us all. But it is certainly true that there are some forms of good which only arise as we respond to affliction.

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Oxford University Press

Doctrines of diplomacy

By D. C. Watt

ALEXANDER DE CONDE (Editor):
Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy
Studies of the Principal Movements
and Ideas
3 volumes, 1,300pp. New York:
Scribner
0 684 15503 6

JOHN E. FINDLING:
Dictionary of American Diplomatic History
622pp. Greenwood Press. £29.95.
0 313 22029 5

The *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy* is a huge work of American scholarship which represents, at least in part, a collective manifesto. The editor, Professor de Conde, has chosen not to identify his contributors by age, professional status, or discipline. With a few exceptions, however, the authors belong to that younger school of historians of American foreign policy who came to the fore in the 1960s as critics of the hitherto dominant liberal Democratic tradition. The influence of Professor William Appleman Williams of Wisconsin is encountered at many turns. Four of the authors have actually served as US diplomats. Edward Bennett who writes on "colonialism" and "mandates" rather than on the Euro-American economic diplomacy of the early 1930s, on which he is the unquestioned master, and Lyman Kirkpatrick being the most noticeable. Dorothy Borg is not among the contributors. There are some odd inclusions. Reading Professor Seabury on "Realism and idealism" one is inclined to ask what he is doing in such company, remembering his robust stand on intervention in Vietnam in the 1960s, and his role in organizing a "Democrats for Nixon" movement in 1972 out of dismay at the nomination of Senator McGovern as the Democratic candidate for the Presidency. I can only identify two non-American contributors: Professor A.E. Campbell of Birmingham University (a graduate of the British diplomatic service) contributes a perceptive piece on "The Balance of Power", and Professor Jacques Duroselle of the Sorbonne, whose own history of American foreign policy caused such controversy in the United States a few years ago, in a brilliant study of "Treaties" shows how the unique nature of the treaty-making power in America by comparison with the traditional European system has contributed enormously to the monarcho-imperial role of the President in world politics.

It takes a massive publication like this to bring home the enormous part played by doctrine in both the practice and the teaching of the history of American foreign policy. Indeed it raises in an acute form the questions how far the latter is actually responsible for the former, and how far our perceptions of the role of doctrine in the conduct of US foreign relations lead us to view historical events only in doctrinal terms. The contents list reveals the emotional and persuasive pull of the concept of doctrine: Monroe, Truman, Eisenhower and Nixon all claimed to have enunciated "doctrines"; Woodrow Wilson has his "Fourteen Points"; General Marshall and Henry Morgenthau have their "plans". "Militarism" and the "Military-Industrial Complex" are listed but not "Navalism", only "Naval Diplomacy" (a clear and dispassionate piece by William Brister, Doyen of historians of the US Navy). Other "isms" are "Colonialism" (but not surprisingly, "Anti-Colonialism"), "Elitism", "Imperialism" and "Internationalism" (of course), "Isolationism", "Nationalism", "Nationalism", "Pacifism", "Realism and idealism" and "Navalism".

The editor justifies the approach, not by arguing the need for such concepts; indeed, on this point it has clearly never occurred to him to ask how far the makers of foreign policy are guided by them and how they come to "look above" the elements of persuasion, in winning public electoral or Congressional support for a particular set of actions or initiatives. Professor de Conde follows conventional wisdom in de-crying diplomatic history as the study of the exercise of power in official relations between countries, through the examination of official and personal papers. It is, he says, "often narrow in focus" even when well done. His contributors, by contrast, "roam beyond areas of conventional scholarship" to study wider issues.

Passing over this image of the diplomatic historian as the hard-working dryasdust, by contrast with the hang-gliderman of Professor de Conde's stable (and resisting the temptation to dismiss the approach of the latter as requiring much less application, command of languages and knowledge of cultures other than those of the United States, much less grind and much less contact with, or need to understand, the minds and personalities of the actors), it is worth reflecting on why the study of American foreign policy has developed in this particular direction, when forty years ago the United States was the home of some of the world's leading diplomatic historians, men like Langer, Fay, Bernadotte Schmitt, Ray Sontag, and so on.

The first part of an answer must be that these were historians of European diplomacy whose work derived from the great outburst of historical examination of the origins and precedents of the war of 1914-18. Few did more than touch on American history even when, as in the case of Theodore Roosevelt and the first Moroccan crisis, American diplomacy was crucial to their story. Historians of American foreign policy followed the great Samuel Bemis of Yale, whose approach to the discipline was rooted in a nationalist consciousness of the superiority of the American ethos. But where they worked increasingly in twentieth-century fields, they were until the late 1960s barred from all but American archives and, if the truth be told, often too ill-equipped linguistically to make use of such foreign sources as were available. It was not until the 1950s that any historian of American neutrality during the First World War thought to look at the record of the Reichstag inquiry into the causes of Germany's defeat, which had been available since the mid-1920s. The Spanish papers on the Spanish-American War remained closed until Professor May of Harvard, that same historian who had first looked at American neutrality through German sources, discovered them in the 1960s, thick with dust and still tied in the original tape with which they had been consigned to the archives sixty years before. Before the 1967 Public Records Act in Britain, researchers into the Anglo-American rapprochement of the 1910s had to wait fifty years before the British version of events could be studied, at a time when American papers were open up to the end of the 1930s, and in many cases beyond.

In these circumstances writing the history of American diplomacy after

1914 was impossible over most of the field and not practised even where it was possible. Historians of American foreign policy, bound by the constitutional processes, and beguiled by the conventions of American political rhetoric, concentrated on Congress, on pressure groups, on ethnic minorities, and, following a trend in American society long ago identified by Charles Beard as the "devil factor in American history", began to identify influences which were regarded as illegitimate. And, being barred from (and professionally bored by) the detailed detective work which underlies all great diplomatic historiography, they turned away from the personalities, the decisions, the moral choices, and the whole actual living world within which international relations are conducted, towards "ideas" and "concepts" they did not abandon history entirely (as droves of them did) for a similarly mono-cultural approach to political science. As a result, one could for years scan American writing on foreign policy in vain for answers to questions such as "Did it work?" and "What did they want to happen?" "How good was their information and intelligence?" "How did they perceive the countries and societies with which they were dealing?" Such questions were simply not being asked - let alone answered.

The William Appleman Williams school observed carefully that American rhetoric and American practice did not always coincide, a discovery which drove all of them some of the time, and some of them all of the time, into a discussion of American "goals" in terms more suited to the analysis of religious heresy than his-torical explanation. The discovery that it is in the nature of "foreign policy" - a collective noun covering the day-to-day catalogue of decisions, initiatives, actions and inactions, which are the only observable and tangible manifestations of America's relations (whether official or unofficial) with other countries - that it can only be conducted by a comparatively small, identifiable and usually appointed "elite" of career officials and elected politicians, threw them badly. Their concept of America derived from Rousseau. In their view, American actions in the world ought to be the product of a Usonian (to use Frank Lloyd Wright's term for twentieth-century American) *volonté générale*. Since it clearly was not, something fishy, something sinister, something very wrong was going on. Economic or business interests were at work; or militarists; or the military-industrial complex. Whatever it was, America's foreign policy was not being made by "the people".

One cannot help feeling that, at least where the younger men were concerned, there was altogether too much Frankfurt School and too little Wiener Kreis in their cosmos. Instead of the a priori sociological formulations of Horkheimer, Adorno or Marcuse, what they needed was a serious Wittgensteinian look at the language and the definitions they



Policeman and window-shopper outside Saks Fifth Avenue, Easter Sunday, 1948: reproduced in Ruth Orkin's A Photo Journal (for publication details see the caption on p 1386). Ms Orkin's autobiographical record ranges from Hollywood to Israel, and her subjects from Burgess Meredith in 1937 to the return to New York of the Tehran hostages early this year.

had been taking for granted. And they still need this, many of them. Many of the concepts analysed in this encyclopedia, for instance, are irretrievably culture-bound. The essay on "Elitism", for example, is not devoted to a study of the social origins, culture, presumptions and suppositions of the various groups that have worked on one another to produce what Russian, British, Japanese or Indonesian diplomats (or journalists) would encounter as examples of American foreign policy. It is an account of the search for "illegitimate" influences, such as that of the armaments manufacturers who allegedly took America into the 1914-18 War. There is no entry on "Democracy" or "Populism" or whatever is the favoured converse to the unacceptable (to the author and presumably to the editor) concept of "Elitism". Nor is there any serious study of the decision-making process in action. Indeed, despite James Rosenau's dismissal of the "billiard-ball" model of world politics as "no longer an appropriate description of world politics", many of the authors clearly have never questioned it; though their interest is entirely in the composition of that ball that carries the stars and stripes. They are not so much historians of American foreign policy as historians of the role of foreign-policy issues in American politics.

The matter is of more moment to the contemporary world than a purely academic wrangle, over what should be studied, and how, in the history of American relations with a non-American world. Professor Ernest May of Harvard (who is among those conspicuous by his absence) wrote several years ago an impassioned attack on the unhistorical nature of those conceptions of the "lessons of history" to which appeal was constantly being made by American policy-makers. It is at least possible to contend that the practice of teaching the history of American foreign policy as though it were any more than a set of intellectual abstractions from an inadequately studied multiplicity of phenomena, actions, inactions, transactions and interactions, has been misleading, both to those who make policy and to those in whose name it is made, and has had much to do with the weaknesses and failures of American policy in recent years.

It is sad to have to end on such a

Culture before Calvinism

by Larzer Ziff

ANDREW DELBANCO:
William Ellery Channing
An Essay on the Liberal Spirit in America
203pp. Harvard University Press. £9.
0 674 95335 5

The intellectual history of America from the middle of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century is frequently represented as a drama in which the followers of Jonathan Edwards play the heroes' roles. Their invincible weapon is the philosophy of Edwards forged by assimilating Locke and Newton to Calvin. With it they reduce liberal views of free will to nonsense, expose genteel opposition to emotional religion as impiety, and demonstrate that the mere doing of one's duty to one's fellows is hypocrisy. In this version of intellectual history, the New Light Calvinists did more to prepare the public mind for the revolution against Britain than did their theological opponents, liberals who were apt to dither on the shores of compromise. Finally, the Edwardsians are credited with defining the major American intellectual tradition, so that when romanticism emerges in the nineteenth century, it is Edwards who is to be identified as the true sire of Emerson rather than any proponent of the liberal, rational tradition established after his death in 1758.

This version certainly has its appeal. Emerson did not clearly see his way to the transcendentalism of *Nature* (1836) until after he had resigned his Unitarian pastorate and freed himself of that creed's constraint on the emotions. In strict Edwardsian terms his insistence on the perpetual presence of miracle may be heretical, but compared with the Unitarian position that admitted both miraculous religion for the benighted of biblical times and reasonable religion for the enlightened, modern era, Emerson's romantic fervour seems spiritually close to Edwards's piety. His doctrine of the reason's control of the understanding, too, is philosophically akin to Edwards's doctrine of the priority of the mind's disposition to the prompting of the understanding. And for all the depersonalization of the deity that follows from conceiving it as an

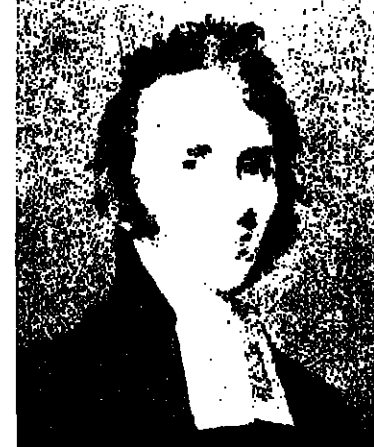
oversoul, Emerson's intense attachment to it as the source of power seems more compatible with Edwards's vision of an angry god with fiery eyes and a tangled beard than it does with the Unitarian image of a clean-shaven deity dressed in the starched white bands of a Boston clergyman.

All of which is to say that in our day, chiefly because of the work of Perry Miller, the liberal tradition and its great exponent, William Ellery Channing (1780-1842), have been diverted from the mainstream to the backwaters of American thought. Time was - Channing's own time, for example, or the radical years of the 1920s - when the liberal religious outlook represented by this most eloquent of Unitarian leaders was seen as central to the moving spirit of America: from Jefferson through Channing to Emerson ran the national respect for human dignity. Van Wyck Brooks, looking at what he was to call "the flowering of New England", saw Channing as the "great awakener". But in the wake of Perry Miller and his school we are less apt to remember the strong grip that Channing took on the young Emerson's mind than the words of the mature Emerson: "Once Dr. Channing filled our sky. Now we become so conscious of his limits and of the difficulty attending any effort to show him our point of view that we doubt if it be worth while". After saying which, in a paradigm of a radical's attitude toward the liberal mentor he has outpaced, Emerson adds, "Best amputate".

In the preface to his debt *William Ellery Channing*, Andrew Delbanco says that his hope "is to help restore Channing to the canon of American literature". Delbanco thus reminds us that Channing, in his day, had as wide a reputation as a literary essayist quite apart from his fame as a religious leader. His essays on Fénelon, Milton, Napoleon, and a national literature in America, led English critics to rate him with Irving and Cooper as among America's leading men of letters. Since Channing's reputation today rests largely on a handful of religious pieces, Delbanco's discussion of his all but forgotten literary output is most illuminating. However, in the end he wisely does not base his hopes for restoring Channing's reputation on these

literary activities; time has not been cruel in dropping Channing from the company of Irving and Cooper.

Nor does Delbanco attempt to reinstate Channing by asserting the value of his tradition as opposed to the more rigorous intellectual tradition of Jonathan Edwards. Indeed, he makes clear that he is an heir of the Miller school and is indebted above all to Miller's gifted disciple Alan Heimert for his own impetus. Thus Channing's reputation is to be restored, not by stressing the soundness of his arguments against his Edwardsian opponents, but by showing that at one crucial point in his career he behaved in a manner that can be related to the Edwards tradition. For Delbanco, this occurred when Channing sacrificed material comfort and hazarded his reputa-



William Ellery Channing

tion by siding with the anti-slavery faction in the 1830s. Later, abolitionism was to acquire some of the radical chic, but in the 1830s it was a creed for the scruffy supporters of universal reform, grain diets, communal living, or cold baths. The patrician leader of New England's "established" religion was an odd associate for such zealots, and initially they were as startled by his defection from the social standard of his comfortable parishioners as were those parishioners themselves. Channing's pamphlet, *Slavery* (1835), and his subsequent anti-slavery activity seemed to mark a strong break with the tradition in which he had been

raised and which his mature talents had served to advance.

That tradition was the Federalist tradition of the powerful, beneficent partnership of the preaching of the Bible and the pleading of the civil law. Great lawyers, such as John Adams, who had taken up their profession only after considering the almost equal opportunities for political influence to be found in the pulpit, offered as a necessary accompaniment to their interpretation of the American constitution a version of American history as divine history. In parallel, Channing saw constitutional law as a necessary complement to his interpretation of the Bible. In the sermon that in 1819 won him recognition as the leader of the liberals, he said that, in opposing acceptance of biblical miracles but firm insistence that the Bible be read critically, Logically vulnerable if not downright indefensible as his position in such matters may have been, he was at the same time morally successful if not downright triumphant.

But Delbanco's endorsement of Channing as a figure worthy of our attention only when he takes his stand against slavery is not so much moral as intellectual in inspiration. In confronting the evil of slavery, Delbanco says, Channing had come to know "Satan's limitless capacity to dissemble". And so, in his last years, the great opponent of Edwards's teachings "finally met, and restated the central demand of Edwards, that a man must combat evil while never ceasing to combat himself". Given Delbanco's view of intellectual history, this conclusion makes sense, but what a price Channing is made to pay for his rehabilitation! The major achievements of his career - his advocacy of rational, moral religion and his warning of the harsh New England cultural climate to a temperate that would sustain literary life - are represented as weak because intellectually inconsistent when compared with the thinking of even third-rate Calvinist contemporaries. And his splendid moral stand is seen as splendid only after it is read as a belated recognition of the force of Edwards's Satan rather than as the courageous action of a man who not only preached the honour due to all men but also acted upon this teaching.

Another way to rehabilitate Channing might be to proceed from a dialectical sense of history and to see

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A Home Movie

The radio is the soundtrack for her life.
- incessant, uncontrollable, popular -
her days alone in a room with running water, punctuated by trips to the bathroom...

Sometimes her black clothes soak in the bath, then a coathanger wears them for a few days, then it is her turn again. These are the colours she prefers. She likes to stifle herself in them,

sunglasses in the corridor like an army colonel, the strong smells of lotion and detergent, loud music on the radio... She exists somewhere far inside these frontiers, fugitive and minimal.

Her room is all white, walls, rugs, furniture. She owns a white portable television set, and stares into its depths like a fishbowl. The sound of its dramas leaks through the walls...

Michael Hofmann

complexes such as the Puritan notion of evil as processes rather than things. From such a viewpoint, Channing may be observed to be combating evil not merely in the form of slavery and its upholders but in the form, among others, of the Calvinists' distrust of the questioning mind and their imputation of Satanic inspiration to it. If Channing's logical chain appears misshapen compared with the symmetrical links of the Calvinists, it may be because it was put to the task of yoking together religion and the growth of human culture rather than holding them apart. Channing wanted to foster a deeper and subtler taste than that which rested content with the incidents in a temperance tale, the melodies of a harmonium, and the black lines of a wood-cut of Washington crossing the Delaware. His liberal theology embraced cultural ends just as Matthew Arnold's cultural ideology embraced theological ends. Channing, too, opposed Philistinism, not just as a sin against good breeding but as a sin against humanity. He opposed a dogma which taught the Philistines that cultural grace meant spiritual gracelessness.

Delbanco characterizes excellently the eighteenth-century restraint with which Channing refused to advance into the transcendental merging of soul and nature in the over-soul. Indeed, for him this represented a threat to culture of equal force although different from that of the Calvinists. Like polar opposites, the monisms of Transcendentalism and Calvinism resembled each other more closely than either did Channing's temperate zone of dualism. So Emerson amputated Channing and can be called Edwards's heir. But it is Channing not Edwards to whom Emerson owes the greater debt. If Emerson resembles Edwards it is because of Channing's cultural victory over

the Edwardseans which permitted him to mature in a world that promoted the leap of his imagination. Had the Moyses and the Beechers rather than Channing set the tone of New England, Emerson would have had to do Channing's work of liberating the rational and moral faculties rather than be empowered to employ them in outdistancing Channing.

If I contest Delbanco's view of history, I have great admiration for his analytic strength. Given an intellectual construct, he, like the best intellectual historians in the tradition he accepts, can open it, examine its parts, determine their connections with one another, and resynthesize the whole with skill and sophistication. His discussion of Channing's turning towards man in relation to his turning away from nature, or of Channing the individualist who is wary of the individual, is subtle, clear, and exciting. He is a shrewd observer and a deft dissection.



This coloured lithograph (1918) by Gabriele Münter (1877-1962) is included in a sale of Modern Prints and Illustrated Books to be held at Christie's, 8 King Street, London SW1 on Wednesday December 2. The sale also includes works by Munch, Mondrian, Kandinsky, Hockney, Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso and Rauschenberg.

Instruments in interaction

By Elting E. Morison

THOMAS C. COCHRAN:

Frontiers of Change
Early Industrialism in America
179pp. Oxford University Press. £8.95.
0 19 502875 9

For a long time what every well-instructed American schoolboy could know about the industrial development of his country from 1800 to 1860 was not much — Eli Whitney and interchangeable parts, the Erie Canal, the coming of the Iron Horse, Cincinnati as Porkopolis and the literary attainments of the female operatives in the mills at Lowell. It was a meagre inventory, but it was enough.

How the fathers made things and distributed their goods and services was not taken to be a part of polite learning. (What, as Matthew Arnold asked, have coal, iron and railroads to do with sweetness and light?) Nor was the study of the subject a seemly scholarly pursuit. Besides, the evidence needed for such study was scattered, fragmentary, unreliable and hard to come by. So, for 125 years after Tocqueville had observed that the way to power in American society was through "productive industry", little attention was paid to the history of industrial production.

In recent years this situation has begun to change. For about a quarter of a century there has been a steady increase in the scholarly exploration of this unfamiliar historical terrain. Starting, as in any new field, with the identification and description of particulars — a tool, a company, a technical procedure — investigators have gradually moved into wider areas: study of market structures, the diffusion of steam power, capital formation, management practices, and so forth. As a result a good deal is now known about the constituent elements, surprising in their number and variety, that contributed to the building of what is now often called the infra-structure of the United States in the early days.

One of the first men to enter this new field was Thomas C. Cochran. Starting thirty years ago with the history of a brewing company, he has since moved through many rewarding areas — railroads, the movement of technical ideas, managerial personalities, and, his dominant concern, American business systems. By the variety of his interests he has laid out many new paths for others to follow, and in the sustained quality of his work — painstaking, but resourceful — he has established a standard for all to repair to.

Now, in this small book, *Frontiers of Change*, he seeks to describe how things look from the emporium he has attained. In the first place, Cochran has assembled the evidence derived from his previous researches, by himself and others, to provide a comprehensive view of what has been called "early American industrialism". There is everything here from modification in turbine design and the refinement of

corporate structures to lines of credit and the founding of libraries where mechanics could read about the instruments they were working with.

Some topics are viewed from refreshingly new perspectives — for example, machine tools as the foundation of industrial advance or the persistence of the idea of a fully automated factory — and some interesting modifications are made in the received tradition. Those celebrated mills along the Merrimack and Blackstone, for instance, exerted less influence on the changing scheme of things than did the metal-working establishments on the line that ran from Troy, NY, through Philadelphia to Wilmington, Delaware.

The most important contribution of this book, taken as a work of history, is not, however, the identification, description, and assessment of the diverse parts, instructive as this is, but the author's demonstration of how, in their continuing interaction, they generated a productive capacity that by 1860 astonished the world. It is the feeling for an evolving process that distinguishes these pages. Even an "early industrialism", it becomes obvious, develops many of the essential characteristics displayed in the operation of later, more "sophisticated" technological systems.

For this brief, authoritative summary all of Cochran's colleagues in history must be grateful. He aims, however, at a good deal more than a solid historical account. The book, with its broader implications, has far broader implications than its title suggests, and it seems clear that its purpose is to relate these implications to current conditions. In his opening sentence he observes that "the rulers of Saudi Arabia and numerous other men responsible for the development of nations must crave to know the critical factors" in the astonishing growth of early American industrialism.

In his thoughtful exposition Cochran does much to gratify this craving by distinguishing the critical factors. But he has also done at least as much to show that knowledge of these factors is not in itself sufficient to produce a nice ordering of industrial development. In their constant interaction they often produce unexpected results. The discovery of new coal-fields or the introduction of a new invention may alter the shape of the whole system or change what men had in mind to do. This makes it difficult to maintain firm direction over the process. As Cochran says in a telling sentence, "the period from 1840 to the mid-fifties appears to be one in which American business was groping for new forms to fit new problems and turning out to be slow and fumbling in finding them". The fact is that the impressive growth he describes seems far more the product of evolutionary accommodation among diverse parts than of some preconceived and elegantly executed grand design. And the further fact is that, such is the lack of equilibrium in any technological system, that this will always be the case. It is a useful and sobering implication to lay before those responsible for the development of modern nations.

This is not to say, as some "technological determinists" do, that such systems are responsive only to their own interior dynamic, and follow their own path. Indeed, Cochran is at great pains to demonstrate that the arrangement of the machinery and the course of its development are subject to external pressures of various kinds. To make his point he cites the fact that at the end of the eighteenth century the United States and the countries of Western Europe possessed much the same resources in prime movers, hardware and technical knowledge; yet American industrial growth differed dramatically from that of Europe. The cause, he suggests, lay in the peculiar nature of the external pressures to which American technology was subjected, what he calls the geo-cultural influence. Equally as important as an enormous virgin territory, with its natural resources, was a set of cultural attitudes: respect for the immediately useful, delight in the new departure, commitment to movement not only across the face of the land but in society, willingness to forego quality in the interests of quantity, the assumption that since all men were created equal they had an equal claim to the goods and services produced.

Cochran returns again and again to a consideration of how these cultural assumptions acted to give a particular shape and direction to industrial development, and in so doing suggests some things about the general interplay of technical and cultural energy that those concerned with the growth of modern nations might wish to ponder. For instance, the transfer of machines from one country to another may seem a simple technical transaction. But these machines shaped by the attitudes peculiar to one society, may not fit so easily as has often been assumed into the quite different structure of another society. Such an exchange can in fact produce not so much industrial progress as cultural turmoil — as the case of Iran, for one, suggests.

There is another large consideration implicit in these pages. The machines with which Cochran deals were simple, and they made, on the whole, familiar things like cloth, shoes and iron stoves. The cultural values governing the organization of these machines were also simple and generally agreed: an increase in the production and distribution of familiar things accelerated the progress of mankind. Today, machines which are no longer simple can do almost anything. And today, the cultural intention — the ends that all this new and powerful instrumentation are designed to serve — is not very well defined or generally agreed. So there is a good deal of confusion in the technological environment and it will not be cleared away, the implication is, so much by technical advance as by further cultural clarification — new definitions of how to use the machinery and, more especially, what to use it for. The only way people can safely organize a technology that can do almost anything, the message seems to be, is first to reach a collective agreement on how they wish to organize themselves.

Information, please

Thomas George Fonnereau (1789-1850): lawyer, architectural dilettante, writer on parliamentary reform and author of *Diary of a Dutiful Son* (1849); further information sought for an edition of his journal of a tour in Italy, 1838-39.

Pieter van der Merwe.
4 Circus Street, Greenwich, London SE10.

Leaders of fashion, 1870-1929: whereabouts of archives, correspondence, and personal papers of writers, designers, and other fashion leaders of the period, eg Mrs Eric Pritchard, Lucille, Mary Eliza Haweis, Redfern, Paquin, Poiret; for a study of fashion and feminine beauty in England and France.

Varlerie Steele.
Clare Hall, Cambridge CB3 9AL.

Edward Lear (1812-88): whereabouts of drawings, paintings or watercolours of Crete, or dated April-May, 1864; for an edition of his Cretan Journal.

Rowena Fowler.
University of Bristol, Department of Extra-Mural Studies, 32 Tyndall's Park Road, Bristol BS8 1HR.

J. B. Lightfoot, Bishop of Durham (1878-89): whereabouts of any letters to members of Lightfoot's "Auckland Brotherhood" for a study of his Durham episcopate.

B. S. Benedikt.
University of Birmingham, University Library, PO Box 363, Birmingham B15 2TT.

Mina Loy (1882-1966): poet and painter, author of *Lunar Baedeker* (1923); any recollections, letters, manuscripts, photographs, or information on the whereabouts of her paintings; for an authorized biography.

Carolyn Burke.
322 Walnut Avenue, Santa Cruz, California 95060.

in the forthcoming Oxford English Texts edition of Robert Browning's *Poetical Works*.
Margaret Smith.
33 Wheats Avenue, Birmingham B17 0RH.

George Orwell: information sought from archives, libraries or private owners who have acquired since 1968 any letters by George Orwell; for a revised edition of the *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters*.

Ian Angus.
20 Church Row, London NW3.

Sir Charles Thomas-Stanford (1858-1932): Author, bibliophile, sometime Mayor and MP for Brighton; friend of Cecil Rhodes; any letters, documents, anecdotes, or diaries containing references to Sir Charles, his house, Preston Manor, Brighton, or to his wife, Ellen; material or photographs relating to the development of the Stanford Estate in Brighton, and reminiscences of life at Preston Manor especially welcome.

David Bevers.
Preston Manor, Brighton BN1 6SD.

Victorian "penny readings" for the edification of the Working Classes: details of place and content of performances, and information which might help in tracing their origins.

Kathleen Adams.
71, Stepping Stones Road, Coventry CV5 8JT.

Serge Voronoff (1866-1951): French-Russian surgeon and advocate of monkey-gland transplants for rejuvenation; personal reminiscences, press cuttings or papers sought; for a biography.

David Hamilton.
Department of Surgery, Western Infirmary, Glasgow W2.

Pre-1800 Williamsburg, Virginia, imprints: information sought of any such imprints owned by private collectors and libraries in the United Kingdom; for a checklist.

Susan Strome.
Research Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Box C, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185.

POETRY

DONALD DAVIE (Editor):
The New Oxford Book of Christian Verse
319pp. Oxford University Press. £7.95.
0 19 213426 4

The Oxford anthologies seem to claim a certain authority. Sometimes the authority is much more than a matter of seeming, as in Dame Helen Gardner's triumphant *New Oxford Book of English Verse*. Each book will up to a point reflect the tastes peculiar to its editor; but it aspires to represent more than this, to tell us about the condition of taste among educated readers of a given time. We might almost say that while a primary function of the books is to give pleasure, their other use and function are to give some kind of guidance. Further, the appearance of a new collection, in this case a successor to Lord David Cecil's *Oxford Book of Christian Verse* of forty years ago, may be taken as a sign that enough has changed to warrant a new book rather than a reprint or a modest revision.

Almost one hundred years ago, in 1883, Kegan Paul published *English Sacred Lyrics*, a collection of 132 poems, beginning with Anne Askew's "Lines in Prison" and ending with Adelaide Anne Proctor's "Per Pacem ad Lucem". In the poems drawn from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there is a remarkable agreement with Donald Davie in the authors chosen (not always, of course, in the individual poems), an indication of some central continuity of judgment: in the seventeenth century, for both the anonymous editor(s) of *English Sacred Lyrics* and Davie, the giants are Donne, Herbert, Milton and Vaughan; and in the eighteenth century Watts, Charles Wesley, and Cowper. Davie begins much earlier, with a translation of "The Dream of the Rood"; and in his nineteenth-century choices he doesn't include poets such as Emily Brontë, George Eliot, and Clough, whose lyrics may properly be called sacred, but are not in even a relaxed sense Christian. And Davie gives us a fair number of poems written in the last hundred years. The determination to go back to the roots of our vernacular, even if doing so involves the awkwardness of translation, belongs to the spirit of our time. And some nineteenth-century poets who in 1883 were thought, even by those who saluted the work of George Herbert and Charles Wesley, to have life — Adelaide Anne Proctor, Felicia Hemans, T. Toke Lynd, and others — seem now to be dead beyond all possibility of literary resurrection. The change in our view of the nineteenth century — whatever we may think of Davie's individual choices — is an established thing.

Davie discusses very fairly the difficulties of his enterprise, the elusiveness of criteria of choice, the inevitable subjectivity of the editor of such a collection, and tries to justify the principles he claims to have governed his choices.

First, he points to the obvious difficulty: that most verse written in English up to the end of the eighteenth century is written by men and women who are in some not too indefinite sense Christians. This means adopting a somewhat narrow pseudo-category of Christian verse, something that is in effect devotional verse.

Then, since a vast amount of devotional verse has always been written, we need some way of sorting out what is worth considering for inclusion, and Davie tells us.

I have in my mind abandoned the carefully neutral word "verse" for the more exalted word "poetry". I have tried not to include any verse that is not also poetry, in a rather exacting sense. And this partly explains why, though I have taken a wider range than my predecessor both in space and time, I have found myself including considerably fewer poems than he did.

Again, he eschews mere religiosity, no matter how fine the poem. The verses chosen are to be Christian in content and in standpoint. By this criterion the religious poetry of Yeats, and such poems as Larkin's "Church Going", Graves's "Angry Samson", Hardy's "The Oxen", are excluded.

Finally, he considers, given that a particular poem is chosen, what text he ought to print. This question is inescapable in a collection that necessarily includes much verse that has been and even now is sung in public worship. In such verses much change has occurred over time, some because a given phrase is hard to sing to the tune to which it is set, some for doctrinal reasons, some are bowdlerizations (not all bowdlerizations have to do with sexual matters), some, no doubt, are consequences of mistakes in copying or of slavish copying. At any rate, in many hymn-books, at least where the editors are scrupulous, no note is more frequent than (say) "F.W. Faber, *alt*". On all this Davie is inconsistent, arguing that some established changes in congregational preference represent a kind of folk authorship which ought to be respected, or not overruled too imperiously, but at times he restores, and we must be grateful, the original, and by all but specialists, forgotten text. In Isaac Watts's "When I survey the wondrous cross" he brings back the radiant second line to its original brightness — "Where the young Prince of Glory died", and gives us back the magnificent fourth verse ("His dying crimson like a robe / Spreads o'er his body on the Tree") too often cut out by squeamish editors.

One question Davie doesn't put and answer, either in his introduction or by implication in his practice, is what to do about paraphrase or translation. He allows translation in the cases of Anglo-Saxon and Middle English poetry; and since he uses the Scottish Psalter and other translations and paraphrases of Scripture, he allows translation and paraphrases of translations. But, to my mind inconsistently, he chooses to neglect that great age of translation, the nineteenth century. John Mason Neale and Edward Caswall, Thomas Carlyle ("Elin's feste Burg") and Catherine Winkworth, were translators who made good poems out of the original texts; it is through them that English congregations fed themselves upon Ambrose

Devoutly distinguished

By J. M. Cameron

and Prudentius, on the hymns of the Byzantine liturgies, on the office hymns of the Breviary, on the eucharistic hymns of Saint Thomas Aquinas, on the Lutheran and Pietistic traditions of the Germanic countries. Davie's omission of these treasures robs the nineteenth-century group of many good things he ought to have printed. It is an irony that he includes one poem by Neale (not a translation), a remarkably silly poem that belongs in some of its opening lines to the world of *The Ingoldsby Legends*.

On the whole, I think the new book is by no means an improvement on its predecessor and is in some ways too idiosyncratic for its role. Some omissions (and some inclusions) are startling. Consider the following omissions: "Yet if His Majesty our sovereign lord", "The Lyke-Wake Dirge", Phineas Fletcher's "Drop, drop, slow tears", Cowin's translation of the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, and perhaps the noblest thing in the Scottish Psalter — "Now Israel may say, and that truly". We are given Ken's evening hymn but not "Awake, my soul, and with the sun". Campion is here, but it is "To Music bent is my retired Mind", not the glorious "Never weather-beaten Sails more willingly bent to shore".

The nineteenth-century selection is very strange. There is no Prynne, no Isaac Williams, no Faber. Blake is represented only by "Jerusalem", a baffling choice. Christina Rossetti is represented by only two poems (Emily Dickinson has eighteen), neither in my view a good specimen of her work (we are not given "In the bleak midwinter"). Francis Thompson is represented by "The Kingdom of God". I think Davie should have staked everything on "The Hound of Heaven". We are given two mediocre but well-known hymns by H. F. Lyte — each is a plain breach of the undertaking to give us nothing that is not poetry "in a rather exacting sense", as is the inclusion of "Eternal Father, strong to save", justly popular hymn as this may be.

The strangest inclusion is that of Wordsworth's "Resolution and Independence". Davie knows that it is seldom or never considered "Christian". His ground for thinking otherwise is that we have overlooked the fourteenth stanza "where the old man who inspires in the poet an unforeseen and unprecedented resolution... seems plainly identified as a Scottish Presbyterian". It is true that the manner of speech described is "a stately speech"; such as grave livers do in Scotland use. / Religious men, who give to God and man their dues". But there is not the slightest trace in what he says or does of anything distinctively Presbyterian or even Christian; he gathers leeches, endures hardships, wanders from pond to pond and moor to moor, and finds a home "with God's good help, by choice or chance" (alternatives no keen-witted Calvinist would accept). He has the virtue of perseverance, but it is in looking for the dwindling stock of leeches. The effect upon Wordsworth is that exercised by other simple denizens of the landscape and by such natural objects as trees, hills and bodies of water. We may say that the interchanges between Wordsworth and such visionary ob-

jects are religious in their tone and moral in the effect described. That they are Christian in their implication seems doubtful, though of course they don't imply the falseness of Christianity.

Some of Davie's selections from twentieth-century work are also bizarre, and some of his omissions are astonishing. Clifford Bax's "Turn Back, O man, forswear thy foolish ways", is simply embarrassing as a piece of anonymous doggerel called "The Heavenly Aeroplane". But consider the omissions. There is no Chesterton, no Blunden, no Anne Ridler, no Robert Lowell ("The Quaker Graveyard at Nantucket"), "Christmas in Black Rock", "Christmas Eve under Hooker's Statue", no Roy Campbell ("The Palm"), no Norman Nicholson, no John Henth-Stubb, no Charles Causley, no Ivor Winters ("To the Holy Spirit"), "A Prayer for my Sun". No one can censure an anthology for failing to include in his collection everything with a good claim to merit. But how is it possible that Davie should have included a poem by Charles Williams so thin as to be almost invisible, and should have given us four poems by C.H. Sisson and four by Jack Clemo (all eight decent enough work), while omitting Winters and Lowell altogether?

We can be grateful to Davie for the interesting arguments in the introduction and the notes, especially what he has to say about "the plain style". (I do not understand, by the way, why he asserts that matrimony is a sacrament recognized by most Protestant churches. That it was not a sacrament was maintained by most Protestants during and after the Reformation period and there is no reason to think that Protestants have changed their minds about

it. That marriage can in an extended sense be a sacramental sign is so plain as not to be worth debating; this can be true of many states, activities, and things; but this isn't what the Reformation debate was about.) It is good to have the reputations of the most important hymn writers of the English Protestant tradition. Watts, Charles Wesley, and Cowper, strengthened in such a way that we are bound to put them in the company of, if not quite at the same level as, George Herbert and Vaughan. But the nineteenth-century selections are too quirky, and those of the twentieth century so perverse as to be unworthy of the critic we know Professor Davie to be.

A final conclusion, forced upon me by reading this collection, and by the reading of other collections and of a variety of hymn books, is that the work of Ecumenism is already completed in the English tradition of devotional poems and hymns. Some years ago it had not occurred to me that I should in my lifetime sing Luther's *Ein feste Burg* during the Roman Liturgy; but it has happened. And I note the presence in the Presbyterian Church Hymnary of some of Aquinas's eucharistic hymns. Again, what could be closer in spirit to the author of the *Pange Lingua* than the great Welsh hymn known to us as "Guide me, O thou great Jehovah"?

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven,
Bread of heaven,
Feed me still I want no more.
I am sorry Davie didn't find a place for this stunning work of the great William Williams.

Altar

Blocking the way to get behind the house
To climb crooked stone steps to see the view
A huge grey granite boulder lay. With you
To help, I'd shift the obstacle with ease.

Was it a mass-rock blessed in penal days
Better left undisturbed? Too near the wall
It made our bedroom tooo. Too flat to roll,
Too awkward for earthmovers' claws to seize.

A wise old mason told us to use fire
And water. One calm Sunday we piled coal
To heaven. Then doused the hot slab from a pool.
Not a seam cracked. Instead, we'd fouled the air.

Lastly, we tried digging a deep wide pit.
Then eased the boulder down, and buried it.

Richard Murphy

JAPAN : JAPAN : JAPAN

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UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
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The era of lost innocence

By Tom Shippey

KINGSLEY AMIS (Editor):
The Golden Age of Science Fiction
370pp. Hutchinson. £6.95.
0 09 145770 X

The "Golden Age" of science fiction, according to Kingsley Amis in the introduction to his new anthology, ran from the late 1940s to about 1960, or just about the moment when he produced *New Maps of Hell*. Writers in the field at that time had had the benefit of early exposure to science fiction magazines. Their ambitions at least had been raised by John W. Campbell. They had not yet developed a demoralizing self-consciousness. Perhaps most significant of all, they were in closer touch with their audience "than any group since the Tudor court poets". If they wanted to make an allusion or play a finesse, they could be sure the point would be taken. Conversely "playing it straight" or doing what you

did last time were certain to draw walls of disappointment in readers' letters—a powerful stimulus to effort.

After about 1960, Mr Amis believes, that fortuitous conjunction disappeared. The "New Wave" grabbed the headlines with its "shock tactics, tricks with typography, one-line chapters, strained metaphors, obscurities, obscenities, drugs, Oriental religions and left-wing politics". Many authors went into decline, good young ones failed to take their place, universities began to pump out theses and articles, and we ended up with science fiction studies, "a new and thriving discipline which has already begun to influence the genre it serves". Amis quotes that last phrase from a book by Dr Partridge of the University of Reading, and cries immediately "Check! Influence for the better or the worse?" There is no doubt in his mind that science fiction has been canonized by academics, just as literature has been ennobled by English courses. In both cases the reason is the same. Instead of doing what they wanted to do, moderated only by the instant feedback of disinterested praise or

blame, authors turned to a laborious concern for critical values, in the end doing only what other people had decided that they should.

Will SF survive its exit from the gutter? Amis asks, and he answers sadly "No". "Science fiction has lost its innocence, a quality notoriously hard to recapture." His anthology of seventeen stories published between 1950 and 1960 stands, then, as a memorial to the lost era, as also a reminder of past glories for those too young to have experienced them first hand.

There is certainly a lot in Amis's theory, expressed though it is in peppy or even blimpish style: "There are usually good reasons for the existence of barriers... the British seem to have come through rather better than the Americans, possibly out of superior national virtue... reliable gardeners were always hard to find". To add some corroborations, the 1960s and 1970s did seem to produce several cases of the good or excellent SF writer who got to the top of his form, wrote a series of masterpieces, achieved widespread recognition, and then turned into a

guru and collapsed. Kurt Vonnegut is the obvious example (to Amis, but also to SF writers generally), but one could add Samuel Delany—*Novi* and *The Einstein Intersection* followed by *Dhalgren*; Robert Heinlein—*Stranger in a Strange Land*—striding straight to one prize turkey after another; and Frank Herbert, with *Dune* trailing down through all its successors to *Children of Dune*, *God-Emperor of Dune*, and who knows what to come. Other writers lost heart during the Vietnam era (Poul Anderson), or turned rich and cynical (Robert Silverberg), or were analysed academically into writers' block (Ursula Le Guin). A thorough study of this era and this genre might well make Amis's case.

There are, however, other possibilities. It is interesting to look at the virtues of the stories selected here. Most of them, to begin with, are downbeat; they are stories of failure. The most evident example is Philip Latham's "The Xi Effect" (familiar already from Edmund Crispin's *Best SF 1*). In this a jolly tone of scientific camaraderie and discovery—look! the radiation recorder's stuck at twenty thousand angstroms, wow! the moons of Jupiter have gone out of phase—leads on to the realization that the whole universe is only a bubble in space-time, and one that has started to shrink, to a savagely satirical scene of dumb taxpayers asking why "the scientists" don't do something about it, to a close of hopeless darkness as colours and light itself fade out.

But this is only one of a dozen snap or chiller endings: the explorers finding out that Earth is doomed, the artificial personality about to be switched off, the escaper realizing his whole world is built on a table-top and he himself is only a market-researcher's toy. One of the qualities Amis has looked for, it seems, is a drive towards creating insecurity; and that, of course, thrives on a consensus to push against. The only story I hadn't read in this anthology, Jerome Bixby's "It's a Good Life", is a bitter fable of togetherness as an isolated community clusters round the TV under threat of death for looking discontented. So was *Astounding Science Fiction* a reaction to *Saturday Evening Post*? If it was, one can see why the delight in witful challenge has faded. We might now

be glad of a touch of cosy community by way of a relief.

Another odd feature is the strongly theological nature of many of the stories. "The Xi Effect" builds up to the Twenty-third Psalm; Arthur Clarke's famous "The Nine Billion Names of God" ends with the stars quietly putting themselves out; Harry Harrison's "The Streets of Astelore" is a straightforward assault on Christianity as parochial, misleading and self-deceptive, written in a style easily paralleled by a dozen anti-missionary stories of the time. Would anyone take the trouble now? Hard to tell, but it does look as if the conflict between faith and reason, so gladly exploited either way by Clarke and Harrison, Boucher and Knight, has simply faded out, not resolved but superseded by other interests. The sacred cows Amis grew up with have been secularized. Attacks now are on orthodoxies which the middle-aged have never recognized; dissent is still there, but the uniform has changed.

Amis's gloom seems to me ill-founded, though, not so much because the things he complains of didn't happen, as because they were the result of individual errors not of sociological trends. In the last years of his editorship of *Analog* (formerly *Astounding*), John Campbell, for instance, made the mistake of trying to repeat past successes, stuck too long with the authors he had discovered himself, and as a result never published Larry Niven—an author of exactly the type Mr Amis would like: independent, shocking, technologically oriented, and at his peak well into the 1970s. His story "Cloak of Anarchy" (1972) would fit this collection perfectly, as would John Varley's "Overdrawn at the Memory Bank" (1976) or Gene Wolfe's "Christmas Eve" from *A Book of Days* (not yet published in this country).

You can still do plenty with robots, aliens and computers, is the moral. And though there was a problem with over-expansion and badwagon-jumping, a few expensive failures (for publishers) cure that. Mr Amis is a good anthology, for the 1950s. But it could produce a better one aimed at exactly the same taste, for the 1970s—and a better one still if that taste was allowed to be just a little broader.

Putative parricide

By David Profumo

B. V. BELL

Food for Worms

120pp. Sudbury (Suffolk):

Lunatic Fringe Publications. £1.95.

0 906159 0 0

In an earlier novel, *Fragments From An Orange-Scented Garden* (1977), Brian Bell described how Harry, an artist in Cambridge ("fair jewel of the East"), breaks away from his traditions and plunges into a nightmarish world, finally to be killed by his putative son. That work was humorously prefaced with this warning: "The opinions expressed in this book are not necessarily those of the author, whereas the spelling mistakes are", and one hopes that a similar proviso is to be assumed for *Food For Worms*—another novel peppered with misprints and generalizations. In some of their concerns, too, the books are quite similar; here, for example, the chief protagonist, Fontaine O'Brien, is disenchanted with his work at Cambridge (once again his "fair jewel of the East") and abandons traditional pursuits, plunging instead into a "hellish world" of esoteric knowledge and delights from which he finally departs when murdered by his putative son.

However, *Food For Worms* strives to identify something more substantial about the dangers of aspiration than these superficial correspondences might suggest. For it is subtitled "A Faustian Allegory"—in "Marlowe's set tradition", the blurb

tic terms the self-interested fashion in which people spoil each other's lives. O'Brien passes his Cambridge days writing a short novel about a sinister seventeenth-century Royalist spy, but abandons the book (it becomes the "food for worms") and returns to his family in Australia, bearing within him the germ of some Old World malaise with him; his experiences have infected for us, but nosophyte is not defined for us, but its symptom is spiritual degeneracy, and it forms part of the metaphoric bout of drunkenness, blight and disease which subsequently shape his encounters.

One of these is with the avatar of an entertaining smoking-jacketed demon. Having struck the customary Faustian bargain, O'Brien proceeds to build up a flourishing business empire in Sydney, steeping himself in numerology, botany and alcohol. With the help of his Mephistophelian friend Bacon, he rejects and marries Troy, a Greek-Turkish stenographer, whom he later loses in a fight for drunken possessiveness. This prompts him to return to Cambridge for a fateful reunion with an Italian lover of his student days, a "fleshy succubus" called Reseda Morbis—so named, presumably, after the restorative floral spell recorded by Pliny.

Though odd snippets of this book are very good indeed, the narrative is too brief to accommodate the Faustian parallels it invokes; while sometimes ingenious and, like the play, infused with an uneasy comedy, it is too often heavily-handedly festooned with jangling philosophical abstractions which strangle subtlety.

Patriotism through prints

By Celina Fox

WALTON RAWLS:

The Great Book of Currier and Ives
America
488pp. New York: Abbeville £45.
UK distributors: Deutsch.
0 89659 070 4

In 1834, Nathaniel Currier, a young journeyman lithographer from Boston, established his own business in New York City. By mid-century, his "Grand Central Depot" on Nassau Street had grown into one of the largest suppliers of prints to the American people, and when James Merritt Ives was made a partner in 1857, the trade-name "Currier & Ives" became synonymous with "The best, the cheapest, and the most popular pictures in the world". The firm's catalogues at one time listed nearly three thousand different subjects, costing from fifteen cents to three dollars each. Pedlars and travelling agents tramped the streets disposing of them on a sale or return basis, while the larger, more expensive designs were handled by regular outlets such as general stores. Some of the prints from the collection which forms the basis of the present volume were rescued from a harness shop in Newburgh, New York, which had retained its old stock.

The "great" book of Currier and Ives prints, selected from the Harry T. Peters collection now in the Museum of the City of New York, is massively and lavishly produced, with splendid colour reproductions which in some instances, even bring out the fading and discoloration of the originals. It captures much of the spirit of the prints, the romantic heights of the *Voyages Pittoresques*, these prints have a naive charm while their liveliness is in sharp contrast with the linear tedium of the black-and-white wood engravings of the *Illustrated London News*. To wonder, as the author is fond of reminding us, they nowadays constitute collectors' items, the rarest worth thousands of dollars.

At the time, Nathaniel Currier certainly made no artistic claims for the works. As Walton Rawls points out, he never advertised his lithographs as "art" but as "pictures" or "prints", simply characterizing them in one catalogue as interior decorations: "handsomely colored and suitable for framing or for ornamenting walls or panels, the backs of bird cages, clock fronts, or any other place where an elegant and tasteful picture is required". He did not make copies of great paintings to sell as such, but as representations of historical events or people otherwise unrecorded. Neither are there any contemporary artists of real repute linked to the firm. Subjects are attributed to Catlin and Inness but their work was probably plagiarized. Artists who specialized in American genre doubtless preferred the prestigious patronage of the American Art Union, which supported them by lotteries of their pictures and enhanced their reputation through the distribution of thousands of facsimile engravings.

Furthermore, Currier and Ives do not appear to have been particularly generous employers. Their longest-serving regular employee was a woman and they relied heavily on immigrant artists, groups notoriously incapable of determined wage-bargaining. The German-born Louis Maurer, the most gifted of the firm's painters of horses, began work at five dollars a week, received a rise to twelve dollars, but had to move to another company in order to make enough money to enable him to marry. Artists were liable to have their work altered, were expected to produce stock work and collaborate on joint productions. In contrast to the accurate reportage that was developing in the illustrated newspapers, with their teams of special artists, Currier and Ives took their material

unashamedly from second-hand sources, whether for series devoted to the joys of pioneer life or the habits of Red Indians.

Yet these prints embody many of the attitudes of the average American over half a century. After a useful introduction to the history of the firm, Walton Rawls attempts to give some account of these, considering the prints thematically as depictions of patriotic history, natural phenomena, the city and the country, outdoor pursuits and the security of the home. Too often, however, the text reads like a parallel commentary, a child's guide to American history, rather than an attempt to describe how the prints articulated such subject-matter.

The propaganda content of some of the prints is obvious. Currier issued many which contrasted the degradation of drunkenness with the prosperity attendant on a sober life: in one portrait, he even removed a glass from Washington's hand to conform to temperance sensibilities. Given his large Southern audience, he did not produce any anti-slavery material but on the contrary, published hundreds of prints ridiculing the aspirations of American negroes. Predictably, he also made fun of women's rights. These were no doubt the stock prejudices of Jacksonian common man and Currier never made any pretence of seeking through high art to improve the morality of the age.

However, it is interesting to speculate what the effect might have been of the most seemingly innocuous print on its audience. Rawls quotes from the diary of a New York mayor, Philip Hone:

Killing buffaloes, hunting wild horses, sleeping every night on the ground... and depending from day to day for means of existence upon the deer, wild turkey and bears... are matters of thrilling interest to citizens who read them in their green slippers seated before a shining grate.

How many citizens were tempted by Currier and Ives's bucolic depiction of the pleasures and thrills of frontier life to pull on their boots and head west? How many thus learnt of the attractions of the New World in distant countries only to realize the gap between reality and the idyl almost as soon as they stepped on the boat? Such musings may seem far-fetched, but Dickens for one, seeing his "state-room" on board the Britannia steam-packet in January 1842 bound for Halifax and Boston, was driven to demand how "this utterly impracticable, thoroughly hopeless, and profoundly preposterous box, had the remotest reference to, or connection with, those chaste and pretty, not to say gorgeous little bowers, sketched by a masterly hand, in the highly varnished litho-

graphic plan hanging up in the agent's counting-house in the city of London". Jacob Riis's photographic exposure of New York squalor could scarcely have had the same impact if the generality of city views had not been so glibly refined.

It would be inappropriate to over-interpret images which rarely aimed at a purpose higher than that of making money. Currier was remarkably catholic in the themes he introduced. He managed to corner the market for religious images at the same time as issuing mildly suggestive pictures of pretty girls. The portentiousness of the illustrated newspapers was not his style; the context of these prints was much more popular. Even the location of his shop is significant. To the south lay the great American Museum where his friend Phineas T. Barnum exhibited such wonders as Tom Thumb and Madam Clofullia, the original bearded lady, both duly celebrated in prints along with other curiosities. To the north on Broadway was the Mechanics' Hall where Christy's Minstrels performed for years. Currier had started in trade by producing lithograph music sheets with attractive illustrations on the cover.

Among his early successes was *Crow Quindiles* which contained Thomas D. Rice's "Jim Crow", the first minstrel song. With its chorus refrain and accompanying "double shuffle" dance, it spread like a musical epidemic on both sides of the Atlantic (even being employed in England by the staid caricaturist HB as the basis of a *Political Sketch*). This was an expanding metropolitan world of the cant expression, instant appeal and easy sentiment, the rush prints for disasters, the news extras and flashy political banners designed for a society where the pace of communication was increasing fast. From the racing clippers to the Mississippi paddle steamers and the ever extending railroad system, Currier and Ives partook of the wonders of the age.

In 1842, Mathew Brady, a one-time lithographer, opened his daguerreotype studio on Broadway and by the 1860s, wet-plate photographic portraits were the rage. Currier and Ives barely changed their production methods over the remaining decades of the century and never succumbed to the mechanized benefits of chromolithography or steam-powered printing presses, let alone photography techniques.

Thus, by 1900 their business had all but collapsed and it remained only for the prints to be disposed of for the bundle and the stones to be sold by the pound. But the needs that Currier and Ives had satisfied so successfully remained and were soon to find fulfilment again; the best, the cheapest, and the most popular pictures in the world still emanated from America, only in the present century they came from Hollywood.

The Tenth Muse

My muse is not one of the nine noble daughters of Mnemosyne in diaphanous nightgowns with names that linger in the air like scent of jasmine or magnolia on Mediterranean nights. Nor was any supple son of Zeus appointed to pollinate my ear with poppy dust or whispers of sea-spray. My muse lands with a thud, like a sack of potatoes. He has no aura. The things he grunts are things I'd rather not hear. His attitude is "Take it or leave it, that's the way it is", drumming his fingers on an empty pan by way of music. If I were a man I would enjoy such grace and favour, tuning my fork to Terpichore's lyre instead of having to cope with this dense late-invented, uncut with no more pedigree than the Incredible Hulk, who can't play a note, and keeps repeating "Women haven't got the knack" in my most delicately strung and scented ear.

Sylvia Kantaris



"Head - Yellow and Black" by Roy Lichtenstein, an oil painting dated 1963: this ingenious portrait is one of 88 drawings, paintings, sculptures, structures and graphics in a sale of Contemporary Art on Tuesday December 1, at Christie's, 8 King Street, London SW1.

The vanity of it all

By Richard Calvocoressi

MICHAEL CROYDON:

Ivan Albright
307pp. New York: Abbeville. £40.
UK distributors: Deutsch.
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The last couple of years have seen a minor revival of interest in the paintings of Ivan Albright. Excluded in 1977 from the Arts Council's pioneering *The Modern Spirit: American painting 1908-1935*, his work has since appeared in two important exhibitions of American art between the wars, one originating in Brussels, the other in Berlin. More recently, Albright's idiosyncratic vision was placed in the context of inter-war American regionalism by the penultimate in the Centre Pompidou's series of huge, heterogeneous surveys, *Les Réalistes 1919-1939*. His work was last seen at *Westkunst*, a large exhibition of post-war art held this summer in Cologne, where he was represented by one painting, "The Temptation of St Anthony". This morbid image of putrefying flesh and matter, every wrinkle, bump and blemish obsessively picked out in Albright's inimitable sharp-focus style, was the artist's entry for a competition sponsored in 1946 by United Artists, who wanted a painting for their film *Bel Ami* (based on a story by de Maupassant). The winner was Max Ernst whose picture, despite its echoes of Bosch, seemed tame compared to the ferocious pessimism of Albright's.

During the First World War Albright and his twin brother enlisted in the American Army Medical Corps and were sent to a base hospital at Nantes in France. There the twenty-one year old Ivan was asked to make clinical drawings of an operation for an aneurysm of the neck. This led to the filling of several medical notebooks with precise water-colour drawings of wounds and internal organs, and later to a commission to illustrate a book on brain surgery which was never published. It is clear that this early spell of anatomical drawing proved ideal training for the microscopic technique, applied equally to human bodies and inanimate objects, which he perfected and did not vary after about 1930. So painstaking is this technique that it often took Albright years to complete a single picture. But his fascination with the surface texture of *minutiae* tends to obscure a deeper purpose. With their cluster of objects symbolizing the passing of time, their melodramatic lighting and, not least, the portrayal of flesh as a livid, bruised substance, Albright's pictures are twentieth-century reinterpretations of the traditional *memoria mori* or *vanitas* subject. As if to reinforce an allegorical reading, he deliberately gave some

of them pseudo-poetic, biblical-sounding titles such as "Into the World There Came a Soul Called Ida" or "Heavy the Oar to Him Who is Tired, Heavy the Coat, Heavy the Sea". One of his most horrible paintings was for M.G.M.'s film adaptation of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in 1944. As a result of working in Hollywood he developed an exaggerated, technical style which is not far from kitsch.

Despite Albright's interest in dissolving forms, many of his portraits have a curiously petrified look. Paradoxically, it is in his less sculptured heads (only five different bronzes are known to exist) that one gets a real feeling of organic life. One of these bronzes, a simple, touching portrait of Albright's wife done in 1954, was recently presented to the Tate Gallery by Michael Croydon, the author of this book.

Ivan Albright, the first proper appraisal of the artist's long career, is timely—Albright is nearing his eighty-fifth birthday—and it contains some intriguing insights into his laborious working procedures. In his foreword a reprint from the catalogue of Albright's retrospective at the Art Institute of Chicago—his native city—in 1964, the painter Jean Dubuffet mentions a visit to Albright's studio:

I saw through magnifying glasses his nests of wasps and mice, his cut-glass flasks, oxidized and encrusted with filth, his old hats and gloves, his collection of dust and spider webs. I saw with stupefaction in his studio on a turntable, the dramatic ground floor of a devastated shack which he had placed there after having numbered all the bricks so that he could reconstruct it with his own hands and position behind it, with an application truly demonic, so as to make appear in the interior of a room seen through a shattered window, the most alarming disorder of singular objects that can be imagined. I shall never forget that. I have never seen anything as frightening.

Dubuffet seems to have been affected more by Albright's obsessive habits than by his paintings, though the crazy stage set which he describes became "The Window", or, to give the picture its correct title, "Poor Room—There is No Time, No End, No Today, No Yesterday, No Tomorrow, Only the Forever, and Forever and Forever without End"—a painting which Albright began in 1941 and worked at on and off for twenty years.

Croydon devotes an unnecessary amount of space to Albright's poetry, most of which makes execrable reading. The book weighs eight pounds and is the size of an atlas. It is lavishly illustrated in colour and includes some enlarged details of paintings which one would rather not have to look at.

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commentary

Examination and transfiguration

By Peter Conrad

Louise
English National Opera

Charpentier said that in writing the text for *Louise* his model had been Zola, while in writing the music he had followed Wagner. In the paradoxical interchange between these two influences lies the fascination of his opera. For Louise, the seamstress who flees from her suffering family to the sexual licence of bohemian Montmartre, is a Zolaesque character liberated from the determined and oppressive fate of naturalism by the exhilaration of Wagnerian music. Zola wanted, as he proposed in his treatise on the experimental novel, to import the naturalism of Claude Bernard from medicine into literature. The novel was to be a sub-division of social science, concerned not with characters but with animate organisms, not with actions but with tropisms, not with society but with the physiochemical compound of the environment. Charpentier's heroine is a suitable case for such analytic treatment, since her biological vitality, her yearning for the sun, is baffled and thwarted by parental resentment, and flight to Montmartre is her attainment of the animal health which, as the poet Julien tells her, is the birth-right of all creatures.

Her career demonstrates, as Zola

wished, "the working of the intellectual and sensual manifestations of physiology", and at the end, when she renounces her parents a second time and succumbs to the aphrodisiac allure of Paris, the opera passes beyond naturalism into Shavian meta-biology: the first time Louise left, it was to join Julien, who had teased her into sexual awakening; now it is not him she seeks so much as a more abstract consummation, union with the *elan vital*, the intoxication of the carnal life-force which she calls Paris. It's here that Wagner enters to supplement and extend Zola, for Louise's rebellion is a clinical and therapeutic version of the atoning agonies of Isolde and Brinnhilde. They have to die to possess the subject of their love, but Louise, cured of their neuroses, rushes off to seize satisfaction here and now. Isolde and Brinnhilde levitate; Louise, however, disappears into the immediate gratifications of the city.

The subjects of Zola's naturalist experiments are victimized by environment, warped by heredity. Louise is rescued from their inert condition by the Wagnerian impetus of Charpentier's score. No characters in opera can remain subject to social or biological law, because singing is a victory over that abatement, a confident, exultant of will. Louise's liberators are musical forces – the tenor voice of Julien, whose carolling salute is a wordless expression of joy and provides her with a motto for taunting her parents, and whose bul-

lying serenade outside her workshop goads her into absconding, making her yield by giving her a headache; the organic orchestral tumult urges her to turn, in her fourth act delirium, from a lyric into a dramatic soprano, propelling herself to freedom by singing so noisily about her craving for it. There's a calculated incommensurateness between the size of the dramatic anecdote and that of the enormous orchestra. The stage is a domestic enclave, a room which – as Zola said of novelistic settings – has a "decisive importance" because it contains and focuses the "multiple influences", genetic and environmental, which imprint themselves on the character; but the grieving, surging, inordinate orchestra is a disembodied world, the impersonal libido which stirs in Louise and (according to Julien's refrain) in all living things. Louise's escape into the festive, ardent city is her absorption into the orchestra. The Zolaesque text subjects her to a microscopic enlargement; the Wagnerian orchestra hews on her a symbolic inflation. The one studies her, the other transfigures her.

Musically, the ENO production serves Charpentier well. Though Valerie Masterson isn't quite equal to the redemptive outpourings of voice Charpentier suddenly requires of her in her frenzied final scene, and John Treleaven is thrilling as Julien, and Sylvain Cambreling, who clearly admires the score, conducts it excitingly. However, the drab designs

of René Allio and his grey, muffled sky sympathize not with the elated Louise but with her oppressive parents. Charpentier's Paris is the city of impressionism, a radiant and hedonistic haze. The brilliance of impressionist light is abetted, in the Montmartre scene, by electrification, when the lovers watch the nocturnal city glow beneath them. This lighting-up of the city matches the erotic intensification of organic life which is the opera's subject. One by one, in succession to Charpentier's Paris, all the cities of modern art are ignited. Janet Flanner in *The Cubical City* called the "gathering electrical effulgence" of New York a "protest against the demoted restrictions of the past", a brazen affront to prohibition; Joseph Stella's picture of Coney Island in 1913-14 uses gyrating light to represent the city as a deranging carnival. The futurist Marinetti declared we were all born from electricity, and saw in the career of an electric light bulb a tragic history. Kurt Weill's "Berlin im Licht" ribaldly greets the electrification of Berlin in 1928 and senses in it the promise of sexual titillation. For this crucial scene in *Louise*, Charpentier even demands fireworks, which detonate and subside above the city as the lovers go in doors to bed; artificial mimics of the organism's brief, vital glow and its eventual extinction. The ENO's murky production makes no attempt to create this incandescence and with its squat rooftops and bleary

sky, looks inappropriately dour.

Some critics, bored by the whole thing, objected to the inclusion of the dawn scene in the streets, where a lecherous noctambulist prowls to procure recruits for the city of pleasure. Cambreling correctly defends this episode as a descent from realism into surrealism; alternatively put, it's a moment when the orchestra rises up to overtake the stage, exchanging domestic accuracy for symbolic truth. The Noctambule and his alter ego, the King of Fools in the following act, are the ambiguous twin faces of the life-force which magnetizes Louise, offering her fruitfulness but also possibly perdition. The impressionist city is an arboreal, sensual dream. The Noctambule is the sinister genius of the surrealist city, which is not a paradise but – like Dali's festering, fleshy New York with its intestinal subways and ejaculating skyscrapers – a pornography.

The ENO production fails to evoke this sovereign spirit of place. The complaint is not merely a demand for pictorialness: the opera is about what Zola called the experimental laboratory of naturalism – "man living in the social milieu which he has himself produced, which he modifies every day, and in the midst of which he in his turn undergoes continuous modification". Instead of a city with its multitude of ecological niches, the ENO gives Charpentier's people only a gloomy and unfurnished stage as their habitat.

The scene is the only point at which a very important constituent of Fowles's novel – the discussion of Victorian culture and society – has survived into the film. The three main parties in the affair, Reisz, Pinter and Fowles, have all publicly expressed the view that dropping the historical discussion was a necessary and appropriate consequence of the move from novel to film. It is certainly inconceivable that much of Fowles's dogmatizing about Victorian science, Victorian sex, the

never lost sight of the romantic behind the coquette, and was matched by the comic sophistication and vocal authority of Linda Orniston's *travesti* Rosmarie, and by Paul Esswood's wonderfully bewildered Arsace. All three were cleverly projected through almost exactly the same resources of mannered excess which had earlier marred the Rameau. Here it didn't matter, for the director had grasped the essence of Baroque operatic comedy, that while we laugh at the grotesqueness of the situations, we respect the truth of the emotions portrayed. Our laughter at some absurd business with a teapot and cups at the opening of Act III was not allowed to obscure the grace and crispness of the musical numbers, linked by a recitative which, though Farncombe and his continuo players still favour the outmoded performance style of detached vocal and instrumental cadence, was far from slight in its bite and verve.

If Charles Farncombe's penchant for brisk tempi had given certain passages of *Castor et Pollux* an unwelcome urgency, it was well suited to this most smartly Italianate of Handel operas, and the cast answered with a sustained awareness of pace and ensemble playing. Lynda Russell

Good fiction and bad history

By Michael Mason

The French Lieutenant's Woman
General release

Early in Karel Reisz's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* there occurs a scene which may indicate that Reisz and his scriptwriter Harold Pinter do not think very highly of a certain aspect of John Fowles's novel. It is one of the scenes that are set in the present, with Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons playing the actress and actor who are supposed to be the leads in the historical narrative. Meryl Streep, or "Anna", is reading a book about Victorian England, and is struck by a passage on prostitution in London. She quotes it to Jeremy Irons, or "Mike", with its conclusion: "the prostitutes were receiving clients at a rate of two million per week". Mike does some tapping on his calculator, and deduces that "outside marriage a Victorian gentleman had about two point four fucks a week". As it stands in the recently published screenplay of the film (104pp, Jonathan Cape, £5.50, 0 224 01983 X) this remark could be uttered in a variety of ways. In the film itself there is a strong suggestion of incredulity on Mike's part, as there might well be. The cutting edge of the remark seems to be turned not against Victorian sexual hubbub, but against our modern stereotype about it.

The scene is the only point at which a very important constituent of Fowles's novel – the discussion of Victorian culture and society – has survived into the film. The three main parties in the affair, Reisz, Pinter and Fowles, have all publicly expressed the view that dropping the historical discussion was a necessary and appropriate consequence of the move from novel to film. It is certainly inconceivable that much of Fowles's dogmatizing about Victorian science, Victorian sex, the

Victorian sense of time, Victorian religious and political attitudes and the rest could have found a place in this film. But the way in which the solitary surviving example is handled by the director and scriptwriter gives me the impression that they were not sorry to be disburdened of all this material.

The Victorian history in the novel is, after all, ridiculously bad. This is not the place to elaborate the point, precisely because the film-makers have had the good sense to jettison the evidence for it. But something may be said about Fowles's discussion of Victorian sexuality, since it leaves its mark on that one scene. To be accurate, the quotation read out by Meryl Streep does not correspond exactly to anything in Fowles's text, though it concurs with Chapter 35 in its estimate of the number of brothels in London, and with the novel generally in its implication that the Victorians were lecherous hypocrites. I do not know if Pinter has invented the quotation (it would shed an interesting light on his approach to the historical material if he had done his own, independent reading – and this seems to be on the cards), but Anna's "book", whether it exists or not, is the equivalent of a source that Fowles keeps citing in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, and which he describes as "brilliant", an anthology called *Human Documents of the Victorian Golden Age*, compiled by Edgar Royston Pike.

A sophisticated defence might be made of the bad history in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, and of certain other features of Fowles's authorial digressions. These things, it could be argued, are part of an imitation of Victorian fiction undertaken in the novel. Hence the dogmatic and simplified picture of the recent past – a kind of equivalent for the Victorian attitude to the Regency period, though it is doubtful if any Victorian would have depended on such limited historical sources. Hence, too, the startling snuggles about our own era (which Fowles says provides "inescapable improvements" on Victorian benightedness, such as "the terminology of existentialism"), hence even the novel's facile generalizations on life, art, truth, the universe, etc. for example.

It seems like a terrible comedown, but the film-makers may be showing a good instinct here. Those readers of Fowles who are not professional critics (which, given his great popularity, means the overwhelming mass) probably also think of the ending of the novel as offering two love stories for the price of one. Fowles is a good, enjoyable novelist, *malgré lui*. His real gift is a plain but venerable one. He can tell a story in a way that grips you. It was interesting to hear from Karel Reisz on the *South Bank Show* that he thinks the authorial digressions in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* contribute to the purely narrative interest of the novel, by creating suspense. And, whether or not Reisz and Pinter agree with Fowles about Victorian history and historiography, it is certain that their treatment of the historical comment in the novel converts this, along with the rest of the authorial discourse, into a matter of narrative. It all finds its equivalence in the contemporary plot, of Anna and Mike. This device is accepted by Fowles (in his introduction to the screenplay) as "the only feasible answer" to the problem of rendering the "stereoscopic vision" of the novel on film. It may also correspond to the only true strengths of his text.

So the film of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, in other words, does no more than tell a love story, or two love stories. One is dealt with in detail, the other more sketchily; though the latter, the modern story, includes the former, because acting in it is part of the lives of Anna and Mike. The appeal of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* has the limitations of its aims, however. If you don't like love stories, or these particular ones, you won't like the film. If you do like the stories, the film must seem a rather arbitrary sequence of metropolitan images and disorientated people. To those expecting a modern adaptation of Fowles's *Lenz*, it is simply a disappointment.

It is unclear in the film whether, reincarnated in twentieth-century New York, Lenz is supposed to have retained the status of poet. Two garbled jottings are the only evidence of his being a literary talent. Rockwell Lenz plodding through the mist-shrouded Vosges; the opening sequence of the film shows him among

the mist-shrouded skyscrapers of Manhattan. And rather than being received into a solicitous Christian household, he is admitted into a squalid apartment inhabited by a cadaverous punk, Oberlin, his vacant girl-friend Rose, and the odd passing pigeon.

In the original story Lenz found solace in the Bible and in the gentle personality of Oberlin himself. In the film, however, Oberlin is a far from therapeutic influence on his visitor. If anything, he has lost more marbles than Lenz himself and has to indulge in frenetic bursts of idiot-dancing to relieve the psychic tensions he experiences at the core of the Big Apple. He also keeps a pet turtle who has lost his appetite for goldfish and is generally giving cause for concern. "I dunno if he's gonna make it", says Oberlin as he sets the turtle down for his daily exercise on the highway. Oberlin's method of alleviating Lenz's existential anxieties is to introduce him to an assortment of derelict buildings and people. This salutary treatment is reinforced by a frenetic musical accompaniment with his seriously disturbed friends, and community singing of Elton John's "Mona Lisa" and Mad Hatters' "around the dinner table when Lenz's paranoia and delirium seem to be getting the better of him."

The young American director, Alexander Rockwell, has boldly transposed the figure of Lenz into present-day New York. Rather than a disorientated literary talent, Rockwell Lenz plodding through the mist-shrouded Vosges; the opening sequence of the film shows him among

"We are all in flight from a real reality. That is a basic definition of *Homo sapiens*." Deliberate, if idiotic, imitation of George Eliot?

This is a desperate line of argument. It only sounds convincing when put in general terms. We can speak about the "omniscience" of the author's voice in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and, as all the world knows, or believes, Victorian novelists were omniscient. Etymologically, "omniscient" and "know-all" should mean the same thing, but in practice they bear very different meanings, and there can be no doubt which applies to John Fowles. He has, indeed, a mania for knowledgeability, for expertise, which betrays itself in all his writing. He is know-all, rather than omniscient, because he cannot bear to seem ignorant, and because he is forever gratuitously intruding specialized information.

But what of the celebrated double ending to *The French Lieutenant's Woman*? Here, admittedly, is a case of ignorance cheerfully endured by the novelist – though it should be said that this very point is made tediously explicit by Fowles, with a good deal of self-satisfied theorizing about the autonomy of his characters (something not available to their poor Victorian counterparts). It is instructive to see what Reisz and Pinter have made of the double ending. In the film the alternative outcome to the love story – happy and unhappy – are simply added on to the two strands of narrative acted out by Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons: the Victorian and the modern. The Victorian story ends prosperously for the lovers, and the modern one does not. At least on the face of things, this falls far short of being an equivalent of Fowles's double ending. Instead of a demonstration of the Sartrean priority of existence over essence, we simply get two love stories for the price of one.

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The powdered milk and the chocolate box

By Jonathan Keates

Castor et Pollux
English Bach Festival
Partenope
Sadler's Wells

Modishness and orthodoxy dominate the Baroque music revival like anything else. Certain composers are resuscitated in an effort, as it seems, to stop others from becoming boring. The indiscriminate rediscovery of Vivaldi, for example, took place partly as an attempt to supply an alternative to Bach and Handel. The late 1960s offered us Lippardized Cavalli as a Monteverdized substitute, rather like the dairy creamer supplied for tea and coffee at the end of an airline meal. It was nice, of course, to be reminded of Cavalli's existence; and it has been even nicer to hear his works performed on terms which do fuller justice to their complexity. Somebody, let us hope, with whom the covers off Carissimi, Steffani and Stradella, all deserving casts in search of performers and a public.

The gramophone has made a substantial contribution. A series of recordings has thrown Marc-Antoine Charpentier into relief as, arguably, the most original French master before Berlioz, though Lina Lalandi would probably disagree. Some years ago, in a BBC interview she made the extraordinary claim that Rameau was the greatest eighteenth-century composer after Bach himself (we were left to assume charitably that Mozart and Haydn were out of the running). To further this view, she and her English Bach Festival team have created a notable autumn fixture in London by mounting a succession of Rameau's stage works at Covent Garden, sponsored by Greek shipping and Argentinian banks, with cannibalized sets from opera house stock and costumes purportedly based on the original *Boquet de Lant*.

The annual Rameau revival underlines the divide between the musicologist and the ordinary listener, who makes a reverent leg in the direction of the composer's historical slightness and the grandeur and seriousness of his stage works. While

wondering when anything of melodic, formal or vocal interest is actually going to engage him, Dr Burney, as so often, is just about right when he said of French opera "it is all analysis, calculation and parallel: they are to be wise, not pleased."

Castor et Pollux, acknowledged as Rameau's masterpiece, rode unevenly towards triumph. The initial 1977 performances were a *succès d'estime* and it was only in 1978, as part of the French reaction against Italian opera that the work, extensively revised, came into its own. Pierre-Joseph "Gentil" Bernard's libretto decorously explores the familiar Baroque preserves of continence and jealousy, love versus duty, and fraternal affection. The music's corresponding dignity of utterance, freed for once of Rameau's tendency towards icecream-sundae orchestral effects, allows for an occasional burst of genuine drama in the stalking bassoon figures and stealthy chromaticisms introducing the chorus "Que tout germe!" in Act II, for example, or "Tristes apprends". There is an excellent off-stage battle, its music cut short on an unresolved closing cadence, and a moving exchange between the twins, where the tension is signally defused by a balletic interlude both pretty and tiresome.

A director and conductor who can effectively reconcile dance, song and spectacle in Rameau for the benefit of modern audiences have yet to be found. Tom Hawkes's production was not simply distracting in its fragmentations but at certain points positively worked against the plot. Archaeological reconstructions of authentic costume and the depletion of an ostrich farm to plume the heroic eagerness enhance the element of directorial camping which on at least one occasion – when Teliaire and her ladies following the fortunes of the battle were made to look like Bluebell Girls on an outing to Wimbledon – threatened sabotage. Notoriously difficult as it is to render the French declamatory style in a way which prevents it from sounding arid and rambling, the singers received little assistance from the staging.

The intensity of their engagement with the music was all the more creditable, Karen Shelby was persua-

sive as the jealous Phébe, and the admirable Jennifer Smith brought a Rachel-like pathos to the role of Teliaire. The *testitura* of Rameau's tender lines demands a specialized suppleness which Peter Jeffes as Castor took time to acquire, though by the end of the evening he was vocally well contrasted with Ian Caddy's stylish Pollux. Belinda Quirey's "period" choreography was unobtrusively worthy.

One over-enthusiastic reviewer the next day praised a musical continuity "which never descends to mere recitative". How ironic, then, that the higher values of "mere recitative" should have been so triumphantly vindicated by the same producer and conductor barely a month later in the Handel Opera Society's production of *Partenope* at Sadler's Wells. Unfashionable and largely unknown, Handel may never make it to the glittering soles of Bow Street, but goes on devastating those who can brave Rosebery Avenue and the de-

The song of the green chartreuse

By Patrick O'Connor

Emmanuel Chabrier
Wigmore Hall

Emmanuel Chabrier is known, if at all, as the composer of *España* (the main theme of which supplied the tune of a 1950s pop song which went "Ho-diggedy-Ho-diggedy, Hey! What you do to my heart"). Balletomanes may remember his *Bourrée Fantasque* as well as one or two other piano pieces which have served as useful "atmospheric" ballets over the years, but his work as a composer of operas and *Melodies* has been neglected, so that the Songmakers' Almanac programme devoted to his vocal music recently was a real act of rediscovery.

The first half of the evening was made up of extracts from Chabrier's operas: *L'Étoile*, *Un Éducation*, *Manquie*, *Gwendoline* and *Le Roi Malgré Lui*. On this hearing there seems little doubt that it is the first of these which is most worthy of attention today. The quartet of com-

mercial, travellers, the song of the

little star, and a duet celebrating the delights of green chartreuse suggested a work of anarchic imbecility, the nonsensical plot being set to tunes akin to both Offenbach and Bizet, but with an individuality of their own.

The duo-barcarolle from *Le Roi Malgré Lui*, charmingly sung by Dinah Harris and Richard Jackson, was more than a little reminiscent of another Venetian barcarolle – that from *The Tales of Hoffman*. The libretto for this opera comique, by three separate hands, has a complicated plot of disguises and misunderstandings about the reluctance of Henri de Valois to accede to the Polish throne. It has the advantage over the libretto of *Gwendoline* by Catulle Mendès, of at least trying to be funny. But the surprise before the interval was a version of *España* for voice and piano with words by Eugene Adenis. This must have always seemed like a parody, but the four soloists managed to make a good deal of its many "Oies". The first half ended with Graham Johnson giving an impassioned performance of one of Chabrier's posthumous piano pieces – *Pavillon*

The evening's only disappointment was that the Songmakers had not been able to include any of the two light operas Chabrier wrote with librettos by his friend Verlaine. What remains of these was once performed in Paris, by a similar group of enthusiasts with Francis Poulenc at the piano.

A turtle on the highway

By Stephen Plaice

Lenz
London Film Festival

The original Lenz, Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz, was an eighteenth-century lyric poet and dramatist. In the film, however, Oberlin is a far from therapeutic influence on his visitor. If anything, he has lost more marbles than Lenz himself and has to indulge in frenetic bursts of idiot-dancing to relieve the psychic tensions he experiences at the core of the Big Apple. He also keeps a pet turtle who has lost his appetite for goldfish and is generally giving cause for concern. "I dunno if he's gonna make it", says Oberlin as he sets the turtle down for his daily exercise on the highway. Oberlin's method of alleviating Lenz's existential anxieties is to introduce him to an assortment of derelict buildings and people. This salutary treatment is reinforced by a frenetic musical accompaniment with his seriously disturbed friends, and community singing of Elton John's "Mona Lisa" and Mad Hatters' "around the dinner table when Lenz's paranoia and delirium seem to be getting the better of him."

The young American director, Alexander Rockwell, has boldly transposed the figure of Lenz into present-day New York. Rather than a disorientated literary talent, Rockwell Lenz plodding through the mist-shrouded Vosges; the opening sequence of the film shows him among

commentary

Should run and run

By Humphrey Carpenter

The Dog Beneath the Skin
New Half Moon Theatre

It seems odd that no one should have mounted a professional production of *Dogskin*, as Auden and Isherwood familiarly called their first theatrical collaboration, since the original Group Theatre production at the Westminster Theatre in 1936, for the play is certainly important in the history of modern English theatre. For about ten years before writing it, Auden had been trying to create something for the stage that would get away from West End conventions and import some of the vitality he found in cruder forms of drama like country-house charades, Berlin cabaret, pantomime, and mummies' plays. And looking back now, one can see that *Dogskin* did help to begin a revolution in English dramatic style, even if it did not get going until much later. (Auden and Isherwood themselves lost their nerve after writing the play, and in their two others gradually slipped back into conventional theatrical mannerisms.)

It may be that *Dogskin* has languished so long because on the printed page much of it looks rather silly. Auden's choruses are as magnificently eye-catching as anything he wrote, but the scenes they introduce seem very thin in print. The play was published by Faber's in 1935, some months before the first performances, and the reviews at this point were on the whole hostile – the *TLS*, for example, called it an "undergraduate rag". But when it appeared on the stage, the response was very different. One of the best plays of the season" (*Daily Worker*), "charged with both wit and beauty" (*Observer*), "ought to run for five years" (*Sunday Times*). This was not because of the quality of Rupert Doone's production, which by all accounts was wooden. It is simply that on stage the play works magnificently.

We owe this discovery, or rediscovery, to Julian Sands's New Half Moon production, which in conception if not always in execution must be all that Auden and Isherwood could have desired. Sands has chosen to stress the play's political content – his designer, Philip Myall, has created a backdrop on which a typical 1930s riotous mob motif symbol of bourgeois suburban conformity is being encroached upon by torn newspapers and filth – but he has not done this at the expense of the poetry. Anyone who knows the play will panic when, at the very beginning, the opening chorus is slashed to pieces, so that some of Auden's best lines ("Calm at this moment the Dutch sea so shallow / That sunk St Paul's would ever show its golden cross...") are thrown away in the interests of getting on with the story. But this is the only point at which the verse has been crudely sacrificed. For the rest of the evening, it takes its place at the centre of the play, and Sands somehow manages to make Auden's magnificent but often ornate chorals speak coherently with the action. Auden himself came to think that this was impossible; nearly forty years after writing the play, he declared that the choruses were merely self-indulgence. But the Half Moon Company work them into the body of the play. They rarely just recite them; they chant them, cry them, shout them, whisper them, act them out, and (most important) share them among all the players cast rather than making them the special property of a chorus speaker or speakers. This is certainly the way to do it.

Jonathan Rathbone's music has the right touch of Well; bringing out the play's undoubted debt to the *Thespian Opera*. It is no mean feat to set some of Auden's rhythmically angular lyrics, keep the words audible, and at the same time produce attractive tunes. The company's singing, which varies from shouting to inaudibility, is not always up to it, and they don't dance well enough, but the musical numbers have the required energy.

It is Tim Potter's evening. Though the Half Moon's programme is so egalitarian that it merely lists the actors in alphabetical order and does not divulge who plays what, the front of house staff were very willing to reveal that he is the tall, gangling performer who gives magnificently epicene interpretations of the Vicar ("Here is a tin of Church of England mixture / Just to show you that our friendship is a fixture") and many more characters, including Madame bubbi, the *disease* who renders a song which Auden himself like to perform in drag: "On the Rhonda / My time I squander / Watching for my minor boy." Potter's mop of fair hair makes him look exactly like a juvenile Stephen Spender, while Tony Taylor as Alan Norman, the simple-minded quest hero, with his slicked-down boyish hair and flannel suit, conjures up Isherwood; so that the time that Max Gold climbs out of the dogskin and reveals himself as the long-lost Sir Francis Crewe, one is tempted to see a resemblance between this charmingly aggressive person in shirt-sleeves and the young Auden.

Three scenes in the second half are severe tests of the director and performers. The Half Moon passes all of them. The cabaret at the Nineveh Hotel finds Sands abandoning most of the text, giving the M.C. an impromptu mind-reading act which involves audience participation, and presenting Destructive Desmond, whose specialty is staging priceless works of art, as a kind of lunatic Maurice Chevalier. (Desmond, incidentally, proved so difficult to bring off in the 1936 Group Theatre production that Rupert Doone decided to cut him entirely; at the Half Moon, as played by Richard Jobson he is one of the best things of the evening.) Alan's amours with the tailor's dummy, Miss Lou Vipond, look unstageable in the printed text, but Sands turns this episode into an erotic nightmare, with the past mixing sex-acts around the bed on which Alan languishes with the limbed dummy. And the Vicar's speech to the Ladies of Prossan Ambo – again, cut entirely by Doone – takes its place in Sands's production as an outlandish self-exposure of the spiritual-psychological rottenness in English society.

Sands even manages what the authors couldn't: to provide an ending. (Auden and Isherwood tried three or four different versions, none of which seems to have worked.) At the Half Moon, after Alan and Francis have abandoned the decaying Pressan for "the army of the other side", we see the villagers write in a demonic possession which finally leaves them grovelling on the ground as do the Vicar, who spreads his arms and throws his head back in a kind of crazy self-circumcision, while his features taut, the teeth and eyeballs protruding horribly, so that we are reminded of Eliot's lines from which the play's title was taken: "Webster was much possessed by death / And saw the skull beneath the skin." Then, quietly, comes the Epilogue: not the lines Auden wrote for the play, but the closing words of his "September 1, 1939", a prayer that in a world of stupor, humanity should "show an affirming flame".

The *Dog Beneath the Skin* continues at the New Half Moon, 213 Mile End Road, E1, until December 5.

1981

When the music stops

By Stanley Wells

All's Well That Ends Well
Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford

Trevor Nunn celebrates Peggy Ashcroft's return to Shakespeare and to Stratford with a brilliant, confident production of one of Shakespeare's more subdued and troubled comedies. The costumes are Edwardian both in design and in lavish multiplicity. John Gunter's elegant basic set of white arches with glass panels and roof, initially suggesting a conservatory, is marvellously adaptable. Each episode is firmly localized. The first court scene takes place in a gymnasium, the young lords fencing and vaulting, their rude health contrasting with the King's physical weakness; but they listen respectfully to his analysis of the virtues of Bertram's father. For the second court scene we are in a clubland – the men in evening dress, green shaded lamps, brandy glasses and soda syphons on the gaming tables. "Firenze", a sign announces, and the set becomes a railway station which is also a transit camp – tents appear in the background – and later a field-hospital noisily close to the firing-line. There is a splendid, on-stage band for the procession of the French army ("Dum and colours, Enter Count Rossillon, Parolles, and the whole army" says the Folio direction). Then we are in a café, the dishes of the day chalked on a blackboard; here the blindfolded Parolles is interrogated, horrific instruments of torture suggested by the scratching of a fork on a tin plate. All is elegance again for the final scene, as champagne flows for the King's visit to the Countess.

Transitions between scenes, helped by Guy Woolfenden's evocative musical pastiches, are smooth and ingenious. Travelling becomes a visual and aural motif. We realize how full of comings and goings the play is as cars rear their engines and characters dress for journeys, depart with their suitcases, and re-enter with them, too, even into the royal presence.

Such specificity is inherently entertaining, and often illuminating. It suits the play's psychological naturalism, the qualities that caused Shaw to compare it to *A Doll's House* and its heroine with Nora. We are made acutely aware of its concern with embarrassment; Helena's as she is provoked to confess her love for

Bertram, the courtiers' at Bertram's rejection of her, Parolles's when the rejection is removed from his eyes and he sees that he is in the presence of those he has slandered, Bertram's at his parting from Helena, refusing her request for a kiss, and, climactically, when faced with the evidence of his own perfidy. A place is created within the play's updated structure for the clown, Lavache. At Stratford in 1959 Tyrone Guthrie, also updating, funkied him altogether. Nunn has Geoffrey Hutchings play him as a physically deformed appendage of the Countess's household, sweeping the floor, occasionally entrusted with messages. Peggy Ashcroft exquisitely defines an indulgent tolerance of his winking and blinking presence, treating him as a simpleton with his own kind of shrewdness and a power to amuse. For once, and with her so it is impossible that an attractive girl who sings seductive songs, dances and shows her petticoats to soldiers in a café should take pride in her chastity, but it is difficult to believe that she should be "of a most chaste renown" in the camp. In the final scene, however, Cheryl Campbell gives Diana a dignity which rebukes the coarseness of Bertram's taunts. Here the production's psychological realism reaps its rewards in a complex counterpointing of emotions. Parolles is despicable, yet Lafew a beautifully poised performance by Robert Edmondson is generous to him; Bertram is contemptible, but we have seen that he can learn from experience, and Helena forgives him. If his progress to maturity is halting, yet he is willing at last to accept Helena as a wife in reality as well as in name, and to ask her pardon. Epilogue is dropped in this production. As the lights fade, Helena and Bertram are left alone, tentatively touching hands. There is still no kiss. A precarious rapport has been achieved; the ending may also be a beginning.

The RSC begins its final period at the Aldwych and Warehouse theatres in January, before moving to its new home at the Barbican Centre in May. The London première of Schnitzler's *La Ronde*, translated by John Barton and Sue Davies, opens on January 11. It is joined on February 12 by Ostrovsky's *The Forest*, transferring from widely acclaimed seasons in the company's smaller theatres. Also in the Aldwych repertoire are *As You Like It*, *Richard II* and *Richard III*.

Commentary continues on p.1403.

Among this week's contributors

J. S. BRATTON is the author of *Wilton's Music Hall*, 1980.

RICHARD CALVOCCI is a research assistant at the Tate Gallery. His *Magritte* was published in 1979.

J. M. CAMERON's books include *Images of Authority*, 1966.

HUMPHREY CARPENTER's books include *W. H. Auden: A Biography*.

D. J. ENRIGHT is the editor of *The Oxford Book of Contemporary Verse 1945-1980*, 1980.

H. S. FRANK's most recent book is *The Disease of Government*, 1978.

CELINA FOX is Curator of Pictures, Prints and Drawings at the Museum of London.

MARK GREGGARD's most recent book is *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman*, 1981.

PHYLLIS GROSVENOR is working on a biography of Melanie Klein.

PETER CONRAD's books include *Romantic Opera and Literary Form*, 1977, and *Imagining America*, 1980.

ALAN JENKINS is one of the 1981 Eric Gregory Poetry Award winners.

JONATHAN KEATES teaches English at the City of London School.

HERMIONE LEE's *Elizabeth Bowen – An Estimation* was reviewed in the *TLS* on November 13.

MARY LEFKOWITZ is the author of *The Lives of the Greek Poets* and a collection of essays on Greek and Roman Women, *Heroines and Hysterics*, both of which are published by Duckworth this week.

CHARLES MADGE is the author with Peter Willmott of *Inner City Poverty in Paris and London*, 1981.

LUCY MAIR's books include *Marriage, 1971 and African Kingdoms*.

MICHAEL MASON is a lecturer in English at University College London.

TIM MASON teaches Modern History at St Peter's College, Oxford and is an editor of *History Workshop Journal*.

WILFRED MELLERS' books include *Twilight of the Gods: the Beatles in Retrospect*, 1973, and *Back and the Dance of God*, 1981.

KENNETH MINOGUE's books include *Nationalism, 1967 and The Concept of a University*, 1973.

ELTING E. MORISON is the author of *From Know-How to Nowhere*, 1975.

JAN MORRIS's books include *Places*, 1972, and *Travels*, 1976.

STEPHEN PLAICE's latest translation, with his brother Neville, is of Tankred Dorst's *Merlin*.

J. M. RICHARDS was Editor of *The Architectural Review* from 1937 to 1971.

CAROL RUMENS's most recent collection of poems is *Unemployed Music*, 1981.

GAMINI SALOADO is Professor of English at the University of Exeter.

T. A. SHIPPEY's books include a study of *Beowulf*, 1979. He is Professor of English Language at the University of Leeds.

HUGH TINKER's latest book is *The Oud of Love: C. F. Andrews and India*, 1980.

D. C. WATT is Professor of International History at the London School of Economics.

STANLEY WELLS is General Editor of the Oxford Shakespeare.

LARZER ZIFF is Caroline Donovan Professor of English at Johns Hopkins University.

'Covering Islam'

Sir, – Readers of the *TLS* who may have seen M. E. Yapp's review of my *Covering Islam* (October 9) should be warned that what they saw was ideological fiction masquerading (as is often the case) as scholarly judgment. Yapp is a conservative Orientalist by profession. In having assigned the review to him the *TLS* was determining the result politically, since it is Yapp's guild and its peculiar habits that I was criticizing in this book and in *Orientalism*.

Yapp does not merely trivialize and avoid the issues I raise; he also quite literally manufactures evidence to suit his polemic, and in the process shows himself to be quite incapable of conducting intellectual debate. This is a chronic malady of his field, perfectly exemplified by what he does in his review.

Take some specifics as an instance. He says that I give the impression of having done my research well but then claims that when some of my references are checked, the opposite conclusion is bound to be reached. As proof he gives two examples. He mentions an article that I discuss as typical of inflammatory press coverage of the Islamic world; it appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* on December 12, 1979, and its author was Edmund Bosworth. The title of that article – which I have before me – is "Jihad: Concept of Holy War Gains Respectability in Iran". In my book I say that Bosworth attempts clumsily to show that most of Islamic history ("the idea is as old as Islam itself") can be read "as emanating from the Muslim call for jihad", the point being that Muslims have always been addicted to violence. The second paragraph of Bosworth's article states that "Jihad has seemed an anachronism. It has seemed as improbable as a contemporary Crusade to restore Catholic Christendom in the eastern Mediterranean would be today. Now we cannot be sure." He then goes on to conclude that the Ayatollah's call for a jihad has a great potential for destabilization and violence, and that "this shows how easily this cry can incite people to action". In my criticism of Bosworth's badly distorted views of Islamic thought, I quoted an eminent Muslim scholar, Fazlur Rahman, to show that the concept of jihad was far less central and uncontroversial than Bosworth suggested to his readers.

Undeterred by any of this, Yapp reads a story by Bosworth in *Newsday* (1) called, he says, "Will Iran Launch a Holy War?" and has the cool nerve to say that this is the article I discuss, despite the fact that I fully identify Bosworth's piece as being in the *Los Angeles Times*. To labour the point still further: what I talked about – and quoted from – was an article in *another newspaper* by the same person, an article that arrived at quite unmistakable conclusions, which Yapp disputes by alleging that Bosworth thought jihad unlikely. In fairness to Yapp one should add that given his inability to refer to what I referred to, as well as his happy gift for substituting items of his own choice, he cannot be expected to come to ordinary commonsensical conclusions. But why does he rant on in a tone of moral superiority? Surely he can't expect your readers to believe that he is a serious scholar and that I am not?

Item two concerns the drift I impute to an article by Ernest Conine, also in the *Los Angeles Times*, in which Conine places more emphasis on the Shah's perceived offences against Islam than on others. I said that if you read Conine attentively you will note that he assumes silently, and then demonstrates actively, that the West is advanced, Islam backward. Conine goes on to argue that what the Shah did offended Iranians "not just because his police tortured people, but also because he took away government subsidies from Moslem holy men". Even the phrase "holy men" carries more significance in the context of the argument about why "the loss of Iran" was bad for the United States, and

the "free world" than the word "clerics". If Islam is underdeveloped and if the Revolution was "a widespread revolt against the unsettling influences" of Westernization, then it must be that in their Islamic hearts Iranians were more offended by specifically anti-Islamic actions like depriving "holy men" of their subsidies than by commonplace, not specifically Islamic, offences like torture. This is what Conine wants his readers to understand because the entire gist of his article was supported by the prevailing context in the United States when he wrote it.

Now given that Yapp tries to pass off a text of his own for one that I discuss, it is pretty likely that he will not be able to deal with things like the interpretation and the drift. Exactly: he cannot. He does a bit of huffing about "what [Suid] would say to a student who perpetrated so elementary an error in a comprehension test" and then having already failed the test once, he fails it again for good measure. In fine, Yapp is an inept literalist when I am talking about ambiguity and implication, and the crudest of falsifiers when a specific item is in question.

If these two examples illustrate the level of Yapp's specific analyses, then it is almost certain that his general views are going to be worse and, what is more important, much less accurate. That is indeed the case. With a bit of shabby innuendo he refers slyly to my "familiar intellectual position", showing his lack of familiarity with anything resembling my position, and then makes a couple of unsupported negative remarks about *Orientalism*. In addition he accuses me of opacity in defining "Islam" (this from a reviewer who hasn't the wit to remark that the whole point of my book is that to all intents and purposes "Islam" cannot and ought not to be defined), and then goes on to say that I capriciously attack scholars for their views (whereas in the case of the two that he objects to, Bernard Lewis and Leonard Binder, I criticize them for not having any views, only attitudes and a guild that they wish to protect). Knowing as little about the United States as he does about Middle East coverage, he confuses my description of opportunistic press hulla-balloo about "Islam" during the hostage crisis with another fiction of his invention, "US agitation".

And so on. I take the trouble to correct some of Yapp's most egregious errors only to indicate again what may not have been obvious before. If *Orientalism* expertise is no quarter from which to expect accuracy in reading or skill in interpretation. For if Orientalists cannot deal with the actualities of their own language and culture, how then can they be trusted when they write about societies they only know through books?

EDWARD W. SAID.

Parr Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University in the City of New York, New York, NY 10027.

'Paradigms Lost'

Sir, – J. O. Thompson (Letters, November 13) claims that my argument against the sentence-adverbial use of "hopefully" based on its vagueness is a rationalization, and that I and others who dislike it should admit that we "just don't like it". I freely admit that even if this usage were not vague, I would still not like it.

I have no defence to Bernard Bergonzi's observation that having castigated others for using "their" to refer to a singular antecedent I proceeded to make the same solecism. I was aware that the criticism of others' prose invites comment on one's own and my mistake serves only to prove how hard it is to write the Queen's English. I trust there is some copy editor at the *TLS* who is feeling as contrite as I do.

STUART SUTHERLAND; Centre for Research on Perception and Cognition, University of Sussex.

to the editor

'The Bookshops of London'

Sir, – If Martha Redding Pease had concentrated on booksellers rather than bookshops her book (reviewed by Lindsay Duguid on November 13) would necessarily have been several times as big. Since the war specialist booksellers have exchanged shops with rapidly escalating overheads for cheaper but more spacious premises elsewhere from which to run mail-order or by appointment businesses.

We ourselves have over 100,000 books in our special fields, a stock which could not be housed economically in shop premises. Many more booksellers, including part-timers, work from their homes.

Consequently, London is rather better served by bookdealers than one would gather from Ms Pease's book, since these specialist booksellers are widely known and have a reputation for being well-informed and helpful.

RONALD GRAY.

Hammersmith Books, Barnes High Street, London SW13.

'Churchill and de Gaulle'

Sir, – Like the twelve other reviewers who have so far commented on *Churchill and de Gaulle*, Douglas Johnson is extremely generous in his praise (November 6). Unlike the twelve others, however, he introduces a measure of (friendly) criticism on certain aspects of the story. I would therefore like to exercise the traditional *droit de réponse* in commenting upon his remarks.

I will not dwell on the statement that "François Kersaudy is probably mistaken in approaching his subject with a degree of sentimentalism". One might perhaps be pardoned for thinking that it would not do to write in an unsentimental way of such a desperately sentimental character as Winston Churchill; that his sentimentalism could easily blend with expediency, unfairness or even machievellism is of course undisputed. But no one, and abundantly documented in the book. The remark that I "have not looked at all the diplomatic and military papers which Churchill saw and which influenced his attitudes towards de Gaulle" is difficult to comment upon. I have consulted all military and diplomatic papers available to researchers during the period 1977-79, and it seems safe to assume that Churchill saw rather more than these. His own archives would of course be extremely helpful in this respect.

Professor Johnson goes on to state: "Kersaudy claims that Churchill probably knew about de Gaulle before he met him, since Reynaud had mentioned him... In a conversation they had had in March 1938; unfortunately, no reference is given in the book to support this supposition. In fact, it is not a mere supposition, and a reference is given to support it. The relevant passage in the book reads (pp 32-33): "Churchill was again in Paris at the end of March 1938... At the time, he also conferred with Paul Reynaud, who tried to persuade him of the efficiency of armoured divisions. This is when Churchill first heard of Colonel de Gaulle and his theories by armoured divisions. It seemed that Churchill later recalled, 'that a Colonel de Gaulle had written a much criticized book about the offensive power of modern armoured vehicles'." Note 32 clearly indicates the origin of this quotation: "W. Churchill, *The Second World War* (Cassell, London, 1947), vol. I, p 220".

It is rather difficult to follow Professor Johnson when he states that in June 1940 "Churchill perhaps thought that he was greeting one of the most important officers of the French army, when in fact he was welcoming a largely unknown and

junior general who was considered by those who knew him to be a controversial character with regrettable political ties." For one thing, it is not clear who these people were who considered him as such. Indeed, few Frenchmen – and even fewer Englishmen – had heard of his "regrettable political ties"; and besides, what "regrettable political ties" are we talking about? De Gaulle had been in touch with just about every political party (the Communists excepted) in his campaign to gain support for the *Armée de métier*, and Churchill could not have been impressed by vague reports of the General's past ties with the *Action Française*, or other right-wing group. Indeed, being well acquainted with French political life in the inter-war years, Churchill knew that the French were all too apt to brand anyone who was slightly right of centre as Fascist, just as anyone who was slightly left of centre was inevitably dismissed as a Communist. Seen against this background, in fact, Georges Mandel was probably right in describing de Gaulle as an "untarnished man", and there is no reason to think that Churchill considered him otherwise.

Furthermore, the first part of Professor Johnson's remark that "Churchill perhaps thought that he was greeting one of the most important officers of the French army, when in fact he was welcoming a largely unknown and junior general" seems to neglect the fact that de Gaulle was until June 16 France's Under-Secretary for National Defence, and had been negotiating with the British precisely in that capacity. In other words, there was at least one good reason why Churchill would not consider Paul Reynaud's Under-Secretary for National Defence as just another obscure French general. But another consideration is perhaps more important still: by June 17, 1940, Churchill had no use for French political bickering, military hierarchy or the notoriety of French personalities; France was crumbling, Britain was in mortal peril, and any Frenchman willing to fight alongside Britain was to be greeted with open arms. That particular Frenchman happened to be called General de Gaulle.

Finally, Professor Johnson writes towards the end of his article: "It is curious that François Kersaudy... should pursue the unauthenticated story put about by Churchill that when he saw de Gaulle at the Prefecture in Tours... he said to him, in a low voice, and in French, 'Homme du destin'." The best answer to this is probably to reproduce the relevant passage in the book, and let the reader decide for himself. The date: June 13, 1940; at the Prefecture in Tours, the Supreme War Council was drawing to an end; There can be no doubt that Churchill was terribly disappointed with Paul Reynaud; the latter was clinging only to the hope of American help, and had not once talked of continuing the war in North Africa, thus making a giant stride towards capitulation. In his disappointment, Churchill seems to have been casting about for an energetic personality, and the image of de Gaulle came to his mind. In the garden of the Prefecture, during the pause, he asked General Spears about de Gaulle; Spears said he was certain that de Gaulle "was completely staunch". The idea must then have continued to travel in Churchill's mind, as evidenced by what happened after the conference: "As we went down the crowded passage into the courtyard, Churchill later wrote, 'I saw General de Gaulle standing stolid and expressionless at the doorway. Greeting him, I said in a low tone, in French: "Homme du destin". He remained impassive."

De Gaulle's aide-de-camp, Geoffroy de Courcel, who was standing next to the General, did not bear these prophetic words. Did de Gaulle hear them? No, I didn't, the General later answered, and he added: "You know: Churchill is a romantic type." After all, Churchill spoke in a low tone, and the distance between the Prime Minister's mouth and the General's ear was not inconsiderable; but being a "romantic type", Churchill may have had, then and there, the intuition that he had before him the very model of the historic figure, who remains unruffled when others panic, simple, reserved, resolved, "sans peur et sans reproche".

Regardless of all that, the book must certainly suffer from many imperfections, as anyone who has read Chapter 17 will probably be quick to point out. I would of course be extremely grateful to anyone who could inform me of such errors and omissions, or contribute additional information on the whole subject.

FRANÇOIS KERSAUDY.
7 rue Rahmkorff, Paris 75017.

'My Dearest Love'

Sir, – From the tone of D. J. Enright's letter of November 13 one might imagine that in publishing a limited edition of Wordsworth's recently discovered love-letters, the Trustees of Dove Cottage were in conflict with Chatto and Windus. In fact, of course, the Trustees are not only delighted that a popular edition is appearing in the spring, they positively arranged that it should be so. The two volumes concerned have the same editor, Beth Darlington (herself an Associate Trustee), but are otherwise very different. *My Dearest Love* is selling on its beauty and rarity, and the pleasure of reading these touching letters in facsimile, with all their dashes and crossings-out and hesitations. The popular edition will sell, as Mr Enright points out, because it is annotated and inexpensive, and contains more material. For good measure, the letters will also be appearing in the standard Oxford edition. The Trustees make no bones about needing the money that *My Dearest Love* can provide, but they have exploited no one.

JONATHAN WORDSWORTH.
Chairman, The Trustees of Dove Cottage, St Catherine's College, Oxford.

'History and Imagination'

Sir, – I regret to say that my review of *History and Imagination* (November 20) contains an error which is quite inexcusable, even to me, and which I did not notice until the issue had gone to press. I complained (mildly, I hope) that the book did not contain a contribution from T. C. Barnard, when it very obviously did; on "Sir William Petty, Irish Landowner". Will you please publish this correction, and give me the opportunity to offer my apologies to Dr Barnard, and, of course, to the editors?

J. P. KENYON.
Department of Modern History, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, Fife, Scotland KY16 9AL.

Letters to the editor continue overleaf

The Cambridgeshire of Rupert Brooke, in which the place mentioned in the poem "Granchester" are illustrated by drawings (one of them reproduced in our issue of November 6) and described in the accompanying text, is published by its author and artist, Denis Cheson, 4 Primrose Lane, Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire CB5 9JH.

Cambridge University Press, the publishers of *The Sophistic Movement* by G. B. Kerferd, which was reviewed in the November 6 issue of the *TLS* would like us to point out that the book is also available in a paperback version, priced at £4.95 (184pp, 0 521 28357 4).

to the editor

'Country'

Sir, - I have only just seen Kenneth O. Morgan's review (October 30) of *Country*, Trevor Griffiths's play for BBC television, and was fascinated by the judgment: "But like other historically-based television ventures, this work simply isn't historical." On May 23, 1981 you published a review of my book *The Private Life of a Country House*, which describes a house and household comparable to the one in the play. Because of this the BBC asked me to advise them on some details for a supposed family reunion taking place in 1945. They wanted to ascertain what could have been done in those days of rationing and restrictions.

and was even more heavily beleaguered than my own native Essex. I was sorry that so well acted a play should have presented so false a picture of a time in which class was irrelevant. I never have quite known how or why we won the war, but we certainly should not have done so if such people as the Carlions had been typical. Evidently television plays, however correct their detail, are no more reliable as documentary evidence than that familiar genre, the historical romance.

LESLEY LEWIS.

38 Whitelands House, Cheltenham Terrace, London SW3 4QY.

Dostoevsky and the Jews

I met four bright and charming young people and we had a hilarious lunch during which I shot down some of their ideas but confirmed that you could have put up a good show, getting out the best glass and silver and drinking excellent wine laid down in the cellar before the war. A butler, disabled for any more strenuous occupation, was perfectly in order, and indeed my mother had just such a one at that date. I was astonished, however, at their reaction when I printed out some of the things the family could not have had or done. "But these were very rich people who had everything," they said. Politely though they were, they seemed not to believe that hardly anyone could get round the restrictions, or wanted to, and I see now that the author's conception was not to be upset by mere fact. *Country* is a house insulated from the effects of several years of total war which bore on the whole population was to be presented amid carefully researched period detail.

I never came across such families as the Carlions, either personally or professionally. Working in a firm of solicitors, I spent much of my time on upheavals in the lives of clients whose mainstays had been removed by active service or death, their houses requisitioned, their finances wrecked, and their homes filled with evictees just as the call-up removed their staffs. The greater the pre-war commitments the greater the difficulties were likely to be, and particularly in the Home Counties; Kent, the setting for *Country*, gave rise to some of the most difficult situations,

Sir, - Letters to you about the Jewish fireman in *Crime and Punishment* have left some basic questions unanswered: why a Jew, and why a fireman? Reasons can be found in the book and among the author's notes. Svidrigailov, who with arcane humour selects the fireman as "witness" to his suicide, is not a fully independent character. Dostoevsky used him allegorically to represent Raskolnikov's "despair, most cynical," as Sonya was the hero's "hope, most unrelaxable." Early variants included a major "incendiary" motif: "the Christ chapter... ends with a fire." The fire determined everything. In the final version Raskolnikov rescues two children from a fire, but this is only alluded to (Epilogue). Dostoevsky's editors made him cut the "Christ chapter" by half because of its "militarism." Possibly the fire was an act of anarchic terrorism (quite contemporary) for which the hero was responsible. Raskolnikov is indeed pushed in this direction by Svidrigailov's cynically bleak views of Petersburg society, incitements which the hero finds "inflammatory" (VI, 4). His despairing but malicious *after-ego* focuses contempt on "youngsters crippled by theories" (ie. Raskolnikov himself) and "Vids who come from somewhere, hiding away money, while everything else sinks into depravity" (ibid.). Here Dostoevsky perhaps flirted with his own pathology. However, the antisemitism is assigned to the novel's most vicious character (Cynicism personified).

representing the hero's worst side. Thus the ethnic slight cuts two ways.

The Jewish theme acquires broader perspective when Sonya declines the story of Lazarus to Raskolnikov (the "Christ chapter"). As Svidrigailov listens next door, her reading gives special emphasis (italicized in the text) to Jews (*judai*) who witness the miracles of Jesus with varied responses ranging from conversion to scepticism, hostility, and betrayal. Some citizens of Judea, like Svidrigailov and Raskolnikov, cannot bear witness to the miracles of Christ, cannot accept literally the Old Testament idea of man's divine image. (The name of Sonya's landlord, Capernaum, symbolizes the same biblical theme.) In the novel, Raskolnikov's Christ-seeking is complicated by dementia, and Svidrigailov plays out the hero's amoral, self-destructive potentials. He is an Anti-Christ whose suicide parodies crucifixion. His chosen Jewish witness, a vaudeville stereotype, is another broadly and debasement (in "Achilles' heel") of the heroic or godlike element in humanity. His "eternal sorrow" mirrors and reinforces the ultimate despair of Svidrigailov.

Dostoevsky himself in his last decade suffered (as memoirs testify) from fluctuating paranoid delusions of the advent of Antichrist in Russia. Xenophobic variants of this tendency can be traced back to his early manhood. Probably the sporadic anti-semitic outbursts of his last fifteen years were rooted in the same real illness (which might now be diagnosed as schizophrenia or psychosis, a syndrome linked to epilepsy, complete with hallucinations). This does nothing to differentiate such expression from any other antisemitism, unfortunately. And yet, the pointed and controlled use of symbolic references to Jews in *Crime and Punishment* suggests not an unconscious outcropping of symptoms, but conscious self-analysis, diagnosis, control and judgment of the author's personality - like much else that one finds in the fiction of Dostoevsky. Probably the truth of the case can never be proven.

JAMES L. RICE.

Apt. 22, 1360 Patterson Street, Eugene, Oregon 97401.

Edgar Allan Poe

Sir, - James Melville (October 30) is printed as saying, "Edgar Allan Poe's short life had already ended some years before when, in 1845, the Japanese reluctantly resumed international contacts." A misprint for 1854 has made Poe's short life (1809-49) even shorter.

EDWARD LE COMTE.

Box 113, North Egremont, Massachusetts 01252.

Pangrams

Sir, - John Sturrock's review of the *Atlas de litterature potentielle* (October 16) was engaging but I am surprised that he accepts the notion that the shortest English pangram is "the quick brown fox..." (32 letters). My children's magnetic alphabet clings to the fridge door and - after hours of experiment and a statistically abnormal incidence of patella disorders - friends and family have identified at least two shorter ones, viz:

Given mazy web of phlox, duck quits jar (31);
Judges vomit; few quiz pharynx block (30)

Does either merit an entry in the Oulipo map?

DAVID HUNTER.

28 Moggs Mead, Petersfield, Hampshire GU31 4NX.

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People of standstill

By Hugh Tinker

BRIAN MAY:

The Third World Calamity

274pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.

£8.95

0 7100 0764 7

Brian May is an Australian journalist with a specialized knowledge of the Afro-Asian world. From his personal experience he produced a study of the failure of democratic institutions in South-East Asia's largest country. He has followed that book, *The Indonesian Tragedy*, with the present more ambitious work which attempts to explain why economic and political development (as many would argue) has failed to "take off" in the Third World.

Thirty, even twenty years ago, Western economists and Afro-Asian political leaders were agreed that with the departure of the Western colonial powers the "New Nations" would enter a new phase of rapid economic development. Over-hasty comparisons were made with Britain's industrial revolution and even more with the infant United States in its advance to the front rank of industrial powers. The thesis was associated particularly with W. W. Rostow and the theory of "The Take-Off Into Sustained Growth". It was believed that all that was needed was a "pump-priming" operation: if Third World countries could not mobilize capital resources as Britain's entrepreneurs had done in the eighteenth century, then the United States and the other advanced industrial nations should provide the necessary "pump-priming" resources as an act of enlightened self-interest. The West came up with aid (and even more lavishly with "expert" advice), but aid seemed only to lead to demands for more aid; and still the expected "take-off" didn't come. Some Third World countries actually seemed to be getting poorer. The West lost interest, and when the Brandt Commission's report appeared it was received with scepticism and even indifference.

May sees India as an economic mess. However, if two-thirds of India's population live on or below the poverty datum line, one-third - hundreds of millions - are beginning to see better things. India is now a major exporter of grain to the Soviet Union and elsewhere, as well as the world's biggest manufacturer of railway stock (much for export to Africa) and a supplier of bicycles for the million (most British bicycle tyres are imported from India). At this time of recession in Britain, Indian industrialists with factories here in Britain have full order books. What happened to their cultural disabilities? And what about Britain? Formerly the Workshop of the World, in the 1980s Britain has shed all its former burdens; it is no longer policing the oceans and keeping order over one-quarter of the land-surface. Alone among the Western European nations Britain is self-sufficient in energy. Yet Britain is floundering: the sick man of Europe, an honorary member of the Afro-Asian club. Why?

For an Englishman, about the only reassurance lies in contemplating Poland's economic ills. May would probably ascribe Poland's problems to the inflexible, unremitting nature of communism. Yet in the nineteenth century, German writers (with whom he often seems to agree) used to write of "the Polish system" as a synonym for chaos. Would we do better to study Polish responses to economics as an aspect of the "racial psyche"?

Perhaps this is enough to suggest that the dichotomy between a negative Third World and a positive West doesn't bear serious investigation. There are signs of positive development in Asia and Africa. The plenty of evidence that both capitalism and communism in their Western forms are reaching the end of their present incarnation. Nothing is fixed and preordained.

German ideas is interesting: Ranke and other German historians saw Asians as "people of eternal standstill."

But wait: the Japanese are Asians, and so are Koreans and the Chinese of Taiwan and Singapore. They seem to be forging ahead: cultural stasis hasn't afflicted them. May does briefly mention Japan right at the end of his book. He finds its economic breakthrough a "mystery", and he is at a loss for a coherent explanation. He doubts if the answer lies in "racial differences in intelligence", though he believes that "the absence of racial psychic difference is obvious". His last word is one of warning: maybe the irrationality which has thwarted development in the Third World is starting to afflict the West also.

This is a book based on extensive research and personal inquiry and reflection; but it doesn't really take us much further. One recalls a similar inquiry by a man with a much greater international reputation: Gunnar Myrdal, whose three-volume *Asian Drama* came up with conclusions no more enlightening. Myrdal suggested that India's economic failings arose from its political shortcomings as a "Soft State". He refrained from suggesting that it should become a "Hard State". Quasi-scholarly generalizations about the Third World thus far are not much more than a self-revelation of Western beliefs and prejudices.

One does not have to be a Marxist of the Dependency school to suggest that any explanation of growth or decline which differentiates "the Third World" and "the West" as separate entities must be inadequate. The arguments which May applies to the Third World apply almost equally to the West. It is difficult to assign South Africa its place, but certainly White South Africans claim that their country belongs to the West. Yet here is an outstanding example of an enclave economy. White capitalism provides highly valued products for the West and obtains affluence thereby, while the Black mass stagnates and starves. Is this because of Black cultural inadequacy or perhaps because of White hegemony?

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Making spiritual contact

By Wilfrid Mellers

MARK W. BOOTH:

The Experience of Song

226pp. Yale University Press.

£12.25

0 300 02622 6

It would seem that no people known to history, not even the most barbarous, has been without the satisfaction or solace of song: a form, perhaps, of self-expression and/or communication that predates speech, since it can exist without benefit of words. This being so, it is curious that the phenomenon of song has been so little investigated. Why do we sing? What kind of activity is it? Is it different in kind from anything that may be offered by words or music per se? In this book Mark Booth bravely approaches these questions head on. Though he produces no definitive answers to them, and in some cases such answers may not be possible, he none the less uncovers some of the deepest springs of human behaviour; and leads us to speculate as to why such enquiry has been so long delayed. Perhaps literary folk have been too doubtful of their proficiency to comment on musical matters, while musicians have, as so often, been wary of a presumed threat to what they arrogantly consider the autonomy of their art.

Mark Booth doesn't approach his theme from the standpoint of a musician but proves that for the most part he has no need to. He opens with a theoretical chapter which defines the fundamentals of song as oral communication, starting from the pioneer work on epic ballad by Milman Perry and Albert Lord. Folk and other types of primitive song offer a low density of information, since that is not the main function of song. As soon as he sings man embarks on an activity that carries him beyond mere personal expression; when his words become music - even in the most rudimentary incantations and enchanted forms of the reiteration of a single pitched tone, the alternation of two pitches - he enters a different dimension. His purpose is no longer only, or even mainly, to convey a message; on the contrary, song tends to deny linear and temporal progression and to put the singer into communion with something other than himself, whether it be called God or the community or his immediate friends or his children. In primitive song, indeed, words are often replaced by magical or nonsensical vocables, as is evident from such disparate folk as weeping women in the Outer Hebrides or horse-breaking Amerindians on the Southern Plains. All forms of oral song use repetition, refrains, hollers and borrowings from previously established songs in order to enforce a togetherness that to some degree effaces self; all oral songs depend on living within given assumptions, while being at the same time outside them. Different *donnees* are evolved for different kinds of song, from ritual incantation to folk ballad, from courtly song to art song, from country song to soul and gospel and glossy pop. All types operate by virtue of their conventionalism. When conventions have outworn their social or magical meaning we call them cliché, though they may still have a limited efficacy.

These considerations apply even to what appear to be, and in a sense are, "protest" songs, which seem to oppose rather than to ballast conformity. Bob Dylan, castigating the plight of suicidal Hollis Brown, invites us to join with him in pointing an accusing finger at the off-stage villains of the piece: "The more vigorously such songs declare lonely alienation, the better they function, doesn't bear serious investigation. There are signs of positive development in Asia and Africa. The plenty of evidence that both capitalism and communism in their Western forms are reaching the end of their present incarnation. Nothing is fixed and preordained."

No less acute is the next chapter, on art-song, Camplon's "I care not for these ladies". It has long been recognized that the richness of Elizabethan culture involves an interrelationship of courtly grace with folk vitality, but this is by far the most impressive demonstration of how the interrelationship works in the context of a specific song poem. The account of the delightful poem is totally persuasive - more so than John Irwin's recent, admirable and far more exhaustive analysis of "Now winter nights enlarge". Despite the artifice of the artefact, Booth convincingly relates the poem to his central theme: wanton Amariyllis is always available and accommodating, unlike the fine ladies who may be occupied with other men and other events, at another place and time. They live in time aware of "what is past and passing and to come", whereas Amariyllis is song-like in living in the eternal moment. She is the folk element, the lyric, and this links up with a discussion of songs as commodities and with the general implications of commodity in Elizabethan literature. Such musical backing as Booth gives to his argument is accurate, though more would have been welcome. The relationship between Camplon's highly "con-

scious" artifice both as poet and as composer and the "instinctive" folk utterance here represented by Amariyllis is a fascinating subject, little explored but by no means unimportant to analysis.

The remaining chapters return to "popular" as distinct from "art" songs, though their popularity is now inseparable from their status as commodities. The discussion of "The Derivation of a Strange Fish" demonstrates how a broadside ballad is a point where orality and literacy meet. "Defined as it is by bought printed words to be processed by the left hemisphere and familiar tune to be recalled out of the right, it represents a long intermediate stage of mental accommodation." The main purpose of a broadside is to sell itself, as a commodity; a subsidiary purpose, which renders the main purpose more effective, is to flatter the listener's (and potential purchaser's) self-esteem - in this case in the form of a "marvel" ballad of brashly public import. To this end verbal niceties are unnecessary, even disadvantageous; all that is called for is a thumping rhythm and a tune that may be inappropriate but has the virtue of familiarity. At a slightly more sophisticated level the song is a theatre song like Polley's "O ponder well", in *The Beggar's Opera*. This achieved a prodigious commercial success by adapting an old and well-loved tune to words of which the sentimental cynicism awoke echoes; as Booth puts it, "The song opens its audience an exquisite moment of disinterested self-pity, an ecstasy above the self to savor its lovely sadness from not too close." Again, song is at once within and outside the temporal situation, and in this case Booth demonstrates precisely how the tune Gay selected contributes in musical terms to the evocation. He might easily have done so in his account of Wesley's congregational hymn, "Love Divine, all loves excelling", though he could legitimately argue that in this instance comment is unnecessary since the squareness of the tune and the enveloping homophony work so crudely to promote, out of the *donnees* of biblical reference, "absolute ecstatic loss in the divine presence". This is an overtly religious use of the basic condition of song: "liberation from the well-defined place and time of the self, into community, concert, communion". A work song such as "Blow the man down" complementarily relates the primary "uses" of song to practical exigencies. Several individuals synchronize their efforts through a co-ordination of consciousness, so that manual labour on ships becomes a manifestation of incipient industrial technology. Like prison songs, shanties promote labour which benefits the employer while at the same time releasing the aggression the sailors bear to their bosses. The gain is mutual, at once practical and psychological, and the qualities of the music - metrically corporeal, melodically reiterative, divided between leader-master and chorus-plebs - are equated with its functionalism.

The book ends with an analysis of four pop songs which have become overtly commercial while retaining the status myth. Booth is especially penetrating on the parlous-song "After the ball", which, published in 1892, sold around ten million copies in sheet form. The appeal of the song, which was a harbinger of pop music as big business, must have been that it lamented the loneliness of this world, as much of both the popular and the high art of the age did. The verses, presenting the loneliness of the uncle who had not trusted love, questioned by the flaxen-haired little girl who might have been his daughter, alternate with the insidiously lilting refrain, which evokes in waltz rhythm the social solidarities from which uncle is self-banished. We, lonely mortals one and all, identify with uncle who represents our lost opportunities, but at the same time enjoys a privileged position outside the hurly-burly of family relationships; the words hint

that he lives in a grand mansion. What validates the mythic status of the situation is the tune, which is extremely fetching, as Booth says, though he denies it the musical investigation it deserves. The song raises questions about the relationship between art and commerce, which Booth confronts in the penultimate chapter, linking the TV jingle "Pepsi Cola hits the spot" to the time-effacing and self-transcending aspects of song defined in the previous chapters. Clearly the ritualistic aspect of advertising jingles, sung rather than spoken, works in much the same way as do children's games and ditties, and has qualities in common with the patterns of repetition and allusion shared by folk ballads and modern pop songs.

Having progressed from oral to notated song, Booth takes a further step in his final chapter, which concerns a commercial recording of the apparently trite "White Christmas". The idea of a *record* is, as the term implies, to preserve something that might otherwise be swept away. The avowed purpose of "White Christmas" is to obviate forgetfulness, to make time stop in an imagined Edenic past; an end to which the music contributes cannily. But of course time won't stop; even as perdurable a commodity as "White Christmas", which in Bing Crosby's version sold more copies and was presumably heard by more people than any other single pop song, is subject to inevitable if not planned obsolescence; which is why the music industry cultivates "patterns of recurrence". The "staggering number" of new songs offered to the public makes it possible for us to find the closest equivalent to the songs that

worked best for us last week, last year, or long ago... As objects keeping the record of songs through time, [our new records] are the correlatives of what we hold out from time: intervals where we think we see that the isolating differences of the world of extension and duration are not the whole story.

Some may think that the examples Booth selects from our modern age are depressingly weighted, as contrasted with those he discusses from previous eras. He might have chosen "mythic" songs - for instance by the Beatles or Dylan - which would have given a more favourable image of what makes us tick. On balance, however, Booth was probably right to analyse examples that spring or ooze from the grass roots of our industrial technocracy, and to demonstrate that their impact is less simple than it seems. In his epilogue he reminds us that we begin to experience song before we are born, since music is "the only form of art and perhaps the only expression of what is specifically human that can reach us in the womb". "White Christmas" and "Love Divine", like much electrophonic tribal pop, return us to the womb in a sense that is perhaps validated by our pre-natal experience, and is certainly reliable to the time-effacement and self-transcendence which occur in types of song we feel no need to apologize for. At the head of his Conclusions, Booth quotes Ruth Beebe Hill, reporting on the Lakotans:

First Born, the grandfathers told, had emerged from quivering mud to the rhythm of his own heart and so man had known the true rhythm from the beginning. Soon afterwards man had learned to use this rhythm for making songs. And then certain ones had discovered the true power in song, the power for making spiritual contact.

This power offers "the experience of unity with what seems to lie apart from ourselves", so song is a human need as basic as bread, perhaps more basic, since without bread some people might die of starvation, but without song no one could, in Zuckerkandl's phrase, "invent himself". This brilliant book is worthy of its tremendous subject. It reveals new perspectives, which will be increasingly pertinent to the new-old world our technology is spawning.

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Bureaucrats in battle

By H. S. Ferns

J. L. GRANATSTEIN:
A Man of Influence
Norman A. Robertson and Canadian
Statecraft 1929-68
488pp. Ottawa: Deneau. \$24.95.
0 8879 046 5

"Norman Robertson", J. L. Granatstein concludes, "was one of the men who made modern Canada. With a handful of other mandarins, he created for the Canadian public service the ethos of duty, high competence and intelligence that animated it in its heyday... he made the Department of External Affairs into the pre-eminent ministry of that service, and into one of the ablest foreign offices anywhere."

This is undoubtedly what the Department of External Affairs wanted to hear when they launched this study "at a Round Table discussion on Norman Robertson arranged by the Governor-General, the late Rt Hon Jules Léger, and held at Government House in February, 1978," and Professor Granatstein has delivered the goods. But how good are the goods?

Granatstein has followed the academically approved manufacturing procedures. He has read all the papers; no less than 145 collections in the possession of public institutions and private persons. He has interviewed 188 people who knew or had some connection with Robertson. There are 1,645 footnotes. Surely this must be the truth?

I, for one, am not so persuaded.

The unsorrowing survivors

By Tim Mason

HANS SPEIER:
From The Ashes of Disgrace
336pp. University of Massachusetts
Press. \$20.
0 87023 135 9

This is a very strange book. Its author-editor, Hans Speier, is a distinguished sociologist of conservative persuasion, who studied under Karl Mannheim at Heidelberg in the 1920s. He and his Jewish wife fled to the United States in 1933, where he helped to set up the "exile university", the New School for Social Research in New York. Unlike many of his refugee colleagues, Speier, it seems, adopted swiftly to American forms of pragmatic liberalism, and he soon distanced himself from the main critical and theoretical concerns of German sociology. After Hitler's declaration of war on the United States he was recruited into government service (alongside German exiles of all political persuasions), and he worked at various "Information" and "Communication" desks until 1948, when he left the State Department and returned to the lecture theatre. However, he did not then sever his connections with the American government. His interest, as an academic, in military affairs, especially in German rearmament, made him a valued consultant, to the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, and he made many visits to Germany in this dual capacity during the Cold War years.

Neither the exact nature of Speier's duties in the State Department nor the precise purpose of his later travels in Germany are made clear in the present volume. It contains only the most tantalizing and indirect information on the subject which could have been a central theme - the role of German-American scholars and administrators in the creation of the West German State. Speier is alternately secretive and quite unselfconscious about his own work and its significance to American and German politics. Sometimes he warns, with no explanation, that sensitive sections are omitted from the miscellany of reports, letters and journal entries

which make up the book; sometimes the causes he was serving seemed to him to be so self-evident, so obviously right, that they did not, and still do not, need to be described, let alone analysed. These causes were all typical components of liberal American anti-communism: reconciling German rearmament with the stability of the new system of representative government; resisting the Soviet Union on all fronts; and, in the interests of both of these causes, combating the influence of the diabolical Right in West German politics. He tells us nothing about how this was done; the interplay between American agencies and West German institutions, formal and informal, remains obscure, as does the organization and funding of conference and political education campaigns.

There is no indication in the book that these omissions were requested by the United States government. Speier's blend of innocence and editorial suppression is doubly tantalizing because he frequently notes the informal and confidential character of many (perhaps important) policy discussions in the early 1950s. At many points his journals suggest that ill-founded American agencies were able to trade upon Adenauer's penchant for secrecy and the deference of German public figures to American in order to exercise a great deal of influence upon West German policies. Speier himself may or may not have played a role in these procedures; he lifts no veils. His description of himself as "reticent" is a signal understatement, and in consequence the value of many of the records as sources in this particular respect is either uncertain or slight.

What he does offer is a mixed bag of contemporary observations, personal and political, on the changing face of West Germany in the first post-war decade, with a linking commentary and explanatory notes. Some of these observations are banal - bomb damage, travel arrangements and menus, political plitudes. Others are eloquent and surprising. The latter do not add up to a coherent picture which would justify the title of the volume, but no one interested in German intellectual history should miss Speier's record of his first post-war meeting with Karl

So long as Skelton managed the little shop and mediated between this civil service department and the political leadership in the country, the organization conformed to the ideal pattern of an ordered bureaucracy whose members were selected by merit measured in terms of education and examination performance. Then came the crisis in Europe in the summer of 1939. Prime Minister Mackenzie King, who was also the Secretary of State for External Affairs, quickly extinguished the neutrality of the department and took Canada into the war.

In spite of his isolationist bias, Skelton adjusted to the new situation, as one would expect a civil servant to do. Indeed, he killed himself with overwork, and a successor had to be found quickly in January 1941. Who would succeed to the Under-Secretaryship? The Prime Minister had to decide. There were several possibilities, although some of them were not on the spot in Ottawa but away in London, Washington, Vichy and elsewhere.

At this point bureaucratic competition supervened. How simple and straightforward is market competition compared with bureaucratic competition! Who gets what in such competition is determined by political and personal considerations. In this case, even an unsubstantiated rumour about Robertson's wife was whispered into the ear of the Prime Minister's friend Mrs Joan Patteson.

Granatstein would like us to believe that in promoting Robertson to the Under-Secretaryship over the heads of colleagues somewhat older and more experienced than he, the Prime Minister chose the best man.

It is not clear that he did so. Robertson was not a good administrator like H. L. Keenleyside. He did not have L. B. Pearson's flair for public relations. He could not be described as intellectually superior to Hume Wrong. He did not understand French-speaking Canada like Laurent Beaudry. On the other hand, he was on the spot in Ottawa. He had a firm grasp of the day-to-day work which had passed across and sometimes remained for ever on Skelton's desk. He had a quick intelligence, and above all the Prime Minister knew him and liked him as well as he ever liked any man.

Granatstein argues that Robertson never wanted power, only influence. This is a disputable judgment. Robertson never wanted public political power. He wanted bureaucratic power: the anonymous power and authority which exists in Whitehall. Unfortunately, some of his compatriots in the Department of External Affairs outplayed him by transforming themselves into parliamentary politicians, notably Pearson, who became Canada's Prime Minister. Shortly after Pearson entered upon his high office he summoned all the deputy ministers - the equivalent of the British Permanent Under-Secretaries - to him, probably as a witness to his glory. Robertson did not turn up at this meeting, and he ended where he began, negotiating trade treaties and then lecturing in a university. Sad, really.

That said, Robertson can be esteemed and remembered for what he actually did as a public servant. He had from first to last a good understanding of economic problems, and particularly of international trade and banking. In this field he was a skilful, patient negotiator with a good creative imagination, and a fertile solver of seemingly insoluble problems with respect to tariffs, bounties and subsidies. He had the additional merit of being in principle a free-trader.

As a security adviser he had a good, sharp mind, and he knew what he was about in dealing with Soviet espionage. As a young man he had been a leftist and he sold the *Daily Worker* during the British General Strike in 1926; unlike, for example, the Clerk of the Canadian Privy Council, A. D. P. Healey who only took his strike-breakers' certificate down from his office wall in 1940. In spite of his burden of work, Robertson kept abreast of the heart-searching of men like Koestler and Orwell, and this stood him in good stead when, in September 1945, Igor Gouzenko defected from the Soviet Embassy with a suitcase filled with Soviet intelligence files. Mackenzie King wanted to avoid dealing with this matter and sought refuge in the

belief that Gouzenko was bad or mad, as the Soviet Government said he was. Robertson, however, believed Gouzenko when he declared he would rather commit suicide in Canada than be executed in the Soviet Union. With characteristic subtlety, Robertson involved Sir William Stevenson of British Intelligence whose advice finally persuaded Mackenzie King to take Gouzenko under the protection of the Canadian police, hear his story and look at his documents.

Of some of the larger questions of politics, Robertson had only a limited understanding. If he sometimes ventured to differ with Mackenzie King it was always in support of the insights of Churchill and Roosevelt. I clashed with him over Indian independence, and he frankly admitted to me that in this matter the Prime Minister did not follow the advice of his department. When he suggested I was a disaffected Red because I agreed with the Prime Minister and not him, I resigned from the service.

Another instance of his failure of understanding was his enthusiasm for banning nuclear weapons from Canadian territory during his second tenure as Under-Secretary from 1938 to 1963. Admittedly, American international policy was open to serious criticism in the late 1950s and early 1960s, but it is hard to see how Canada could remain an ally of the United States and at the same time contract out of the principal defence system of North America. Granatstein seeks an explanation in a possible reversion to the radicalism of Robertson's youth. This is unlikely. More likely is Robertson's inclination to serve the political authorities by proposing policies in line with their known dispositions. Prime Minister Diefenbaker was instinctively anti-American, and the Minister of External Affairs, Howard Green, was an enthusiast for peace and disarmament. Neither was very well acquainted with politics beyond the confines of the Canadian House of Commons and the constituencies back home. To have an expert devise some policies which seemed to have electoral popularity was agreeable to them. Furthermore, my guess is that Robertson wanted to keep Pearson from becoming Prime Minister.

Granatstein says "there can be no doubt that Norman Robertson was delighted by the election results" (which brought Pearson to power). I doubt this, and everything which followed reinforces this view. Pearson's electoral victory ended Robertson's career. In bureaucratic wars there are winners and losers. Retirement pensions and supernumerary jobs cannot conceal this.

Sandhurst style

By Lucy Mair

OLUSEGUN OBASANJO:
My Command
An Account of the Nigerian Civil War 1967-1970
192pp. Heinemann Educational. £8.50
0 435 96333 6

"It was getting dark. I met Lt Col David Ogundimu who had been my senior officer in the 5 Battalion at Kaduna, before independence... We hugged and embraced, both of us almost shedding tears of joy. Nigeria's civil war must have been the only one in which all the senior officers on both sides had been through Sandhurst. In which both sides followed Sandhurst tactics, regardless of popularities of terrain and of the desperate shortage of the weaponry without which they made no sense; and the first one in which each side hired a public relations firm to present its image."

General Obasanjo, who became Nigeria's Head of State after the

assassination of Murtala Mohammed in 1976 and guided the return to civilian rule, gives in *My Command* his own account of the civil war and his part in it. In May 1969, when Gowon replaced all his three divisional commanders, he took over 3 Marine Commando Division from the "Black Scorpion" Adekunle, led their final advance and received the surrender of Philip Effiong after Ojukwu had left the country. The Sandhurst style makes this campaign narrative difficult for civilians, but it is clearly not personal bias that leads him to describe the two heartland as "rebel occupied". Non-professionals may find the less formal account of his measures to restore morale more interesting, as well as those of those final hours which had so much the character of a reunion of old schoolfellows.

General Obasanjo is rather too ready to interpret the motives of foreign governments and relief agencies solely in terms of duplicity and self-interest. However, he sees with hindsight that Nigeria could have been held together neither as a centralized state nor as one in which the different regions were vastly unequal in population and wealth.

Anti-home thoughts from abroad

By Alan Jenkins

IAN S. MACNIVEN and HARRY T. MOORE (Editors):
Literary Lifelines
The Richard Aldington-Lawrence Durrell Correspondence
236pp. Faber. £8.95.
0 571 11501 2

LAWRENCE DURRELL:
A Smile in the Mind's Eye
64 pp. Wildwood House. £3.95.
0 7045 30 45 7

Collected Poems 1931-1974
Edited by James A. Brigham
350pp. Faber. £9.
0 571 18009 4

Philip Larkin's "No" to foreign poetry and Kingsley Amis's dismissal of "abroad" are, happily, no longer given as much currency as they used to be; but no amount of talk about narrow-mindedness, complacency or parochialism accounts for the feeling of wounded betrayal, the petulant disdain still provoked in some quarters by mention of "expatriate" writers - such as Lawrence Durrell and Richard Aldington - who for different reasons and in different generations obey an obscure impulse or make a conscious decision to leave this country, more or less for good.

By the time Aldington left, in 1928, he had already developed a strong attachment to French literature, and had acquired a reputation as a skilled interpreter of that literature to the English; but by the 1950s Durrell had to press to review, for the *New Statesman*, Aldington's critical introduction to the Provencal poet (and Nobel prize-winner) Frédéric Mistral. Nor has Durrell himself been let off lightly. Over twenty years ago a *TLS* reviewer wrote that "Mr Durrell and Miss Compton-Burnett meet with such praise in France as to raise many a lukewarm English eyebrow..."

Ivy Compton-Burnett's response is unrecorded; but Durrell took the opportunity, in his "Ode to a Luke-war Eyebrow", to hit back with good-humoured acerbity at the reviewer who "Dost in prose bald and breathless exhale an ineffable / Condescension" and at "the cold steamed cod of thy monochrome / proleg", ending with a salvo of warnings to the "fog-bound Thames-bedevilled fabulist" that "the rewards of laziness will be a conferred / mereness, a dark / Sterility, the pedant's parasitic portion". No one, certainly, could accuse Durrell of either laziness or monochrome proleg.

There is, however, almost nothing else that Durrell cannot be accused of. But the objections, at least when raised by a voice from England, are likely to be the kind which betray as much about the carper's post-Movement, anti-Romantic prejudices as they tell us about Durrell. For Durrell, as Edward Lucie-Smith once pointed out, has committed all the sins. He is a denizen of "abroad" who has never shown much interest in or respect for the home-grown; he has spent most of his writing life detailing his passion for the exotic, whether in landscape, literature or sex; he has closely identified himself with a string of places, people and myths, where the proper English attitude is one of sceptical distance; he is a curiously and evidently Mediterranean figure as he sits, heartland as "rebel occupied". Non-professionals may find the less formal account of his measures to restore morale more interesting, as well as those of those final hours which had so much the character of a reunion of old schoolfellows.

The situation is not without its ironies, of which Durrell is the first

to show himself sharply aware. The "Ode" is one witness to that, and another is his correspondence with Richard Aldington. For the letters suggest a good deal of what self-imposed exile has meant to both men. Beginning (apart from Aldington's polite 1933 reply to a lost fan-letter sent by a youthful Durrell) in 1937, these letters span the years until Aldington's death in 1962.

Aldington had had a "distinguished career", sketched by the editors in their introduction. Preferring the wines and cuisine of France as well as its "freer intellectual climate" might, in 1928, have seemed good reason to go there to live permanently, and the French connection was for Aldington a strong and compelling one. In a letter of thirty-odd years

of a self-conscious and professional writer accepting the fact that he is written out and making, more or less, a decision to bow out as well.

The paradox is that despite of Aldington's contempt for "Englishness", there is such a strong element of English tact and "good manners" behind this. For, while the period covered by the letters represents the time of Aldington's eclipse - in England at any rate - it was the beginning, for Durrell, of something akin to Samuel Beckett's "Great Fame". After writing poetry for twenty-five years to some critical acclaim but little financial effect, and having got Cyprus and Rhodes temporarily "out of his system", Durrell was launched, by the time he established contact with Aldington in Montpellier,

with an exotically-named lunatic who claimed he was the rightful King of Poland, and whom Aldington befriended. Durrell has one nice moment of understatement, which still doesn't do him much credit: "I'm afraid my anti-jewishness doesn't extend as far as Belsen, and never will. What is one to say to someone who publicly approves? Silence were better..."

Could Durrell have been unaware of the irony, none too comic, of Aldington's pronouncement on "that pack of pansy-cowards who now rule the roost in 'poetry'" - by whom he means, most likely, Auden, Spender and MacNeice? This written in September 1958? And this from a man who had published, in his *imaginaire* days, the following dreamily

Was Aldington's "ill nature" a pose? In the introduction to *Literary Lifelines* there are emphatic testimonies to his kindness from John Galsworthy, Henry Miller and Samuel Beckett (who knew him in his first years in Paris); in the letters themselves, there is the continuing testimony of affection felt for him by Durrell and, perhaps even more so, by Durrell's wife Claude. Perhaps, Aldington's health being what it was - uncertain to bad - they were pleased to see these punch-drunk signs of life. A pity that the signs couldn't have been less filled with bitterness, less resonant with the ground-note of *contempt*: contempt for other writers (excepting Durrell), for the proletariat, the English, the "We don't want his condescending crock" tears. I split on that particular effusion of a draft-dodging yank. There is some justification for this: a raw nerve, a wound in memory, has been touched. But like Aldington's hostility towards "charm, smiling at the good mouth", it is a twisted kind of integrity.

There are more attractive touches certainly, flashes of humour, tenderness and pathos which allow us to share the qualities of the man Durrell loved. Despite all the bluff and bluster, Aldington had a gift for friendship, and also for complete devotion: the letters when they speak of his daughter (and companion of his later years) Catherine, and of his ex-wife H. D. in her last illness, convince us of that. Also this wry aside on a passage in *Clelia*:

I think you express there an ultimate tenderness for Woman which nobody else has ever reached. Lorenzo [Lawrence] used to talk about it, but mainly ended up in punching Frieda's face, pulling her hair and calling her a shitbag. In my lower middle class way I could never quite rally round that.

Yet, when Aldington drops his guard there was also a genuine love for Lawrence: "Just getting to the end of the book on D. H. L., and killing Lorenzo over again, quoted 'Bavarian Gentians' which is so beautiful and still so moving, I can't go on..."

There is nothing so close to the heart of the matter from Durrell. He emerges as an immensely gregarious man of large appetites and energies, one who was talkative about "being a writer" (as he is about being a lover, father and a newcomer to the *Mid*) but who never, somehow, wholly convinces us that the writing matters all that much. All part of the game, of course, to pretend that it doesn't, but there is little sense of anything beyond the paraphernalia of publishers' deadlines and translation deals, advances and sales figures, royalties and reviews. On the family side, it is true, there is an impression of enormous warmth. But this is translated, on the literary side, into a persona of *Boy's Own* enthusiasm, only one than goes in for fiction rather than, say, flying biplanes or trekking to the Poles.

Richness of detail on plumbing and heating arrangements (not to be entered into lightly in the case of that area bounded by Montpellier to the west, Saint-Rémy and Nîmes to the north, and Aix-en-Provence to the east), on the Durrell daughters' holidays, the weather, and the state of the *garçonne* is not really balanced by this kind of thing on the remark-



Jill Kremenitz's photograph (1974) of Lawrence Durrell and Henry Miller as beaming bedfellows in *Pacific Palisades, California*, is taken from her delightful and revealing collection of "literary portraits" *The Writer's Island* (Unnumbered pages. David Godine, 4 Blackfriars Rd, London SE1. £17.50. 0 87923 349 4). Kremenitz, who regards her work as "a journalistic endeavour", often lets her subjects "choose the locations and circumstances they feel best project their character". She has photographed John Updike skipping, Paul Theroux standing by a train, Gore Vidal talking to Barbara Walters while four television monitors show Vidal, alone, talking, P. G. Wodehouse holding a dachshund, Pablo Neruda a large shell, and Kurt Vonnegut feeding his baby grandson while reading a newspaper.

later, however, he is full of impatience and self-pity, fidgeting for Italy, and the letters as a whole show Aldington's growing sense of dereliction; he had "slipped from eminence", and was in no position to climb back up, when Durrell arrived on the scene.

The letters reveal the development of a curious but obviously deep and affectionate friendship, based initially on the younger man's enthusiasm for Aldington's writing, then the accident that brought Durrell to live within a few miles of Aldington in southern France, then a steadily growing sense of being allied by deeper links: not just mutual admiration, sympathy of outlook, or the feeling of being "brothers" in "the magic", the "damnable" trade of writing (as Durrell calls it in two articles), but comrades in an expatriate struggle against British obscurism, ignorance and malice - the forces ranged against them by reviewers, publishers and the public alike in the "isle dolorosa" (Aldington, posturing too). In fact the spleen against little Englandism is vented mainly by Aldington, and it is hard not to feel, as the diatribes intensify and Aldington vituperates with increasing violence, and as the eulogies and laments grow more clamorous for Roy Campbell, that the crimes exist for the most part in Aldington's head. As the distressed imagination of the author of *Death of a Hero* and *A Dream in the Luxembourg* ranges masterfully over the glories of the past and the debris of the present, the overall impression is not that of a one-central figure on the landscape unjustly pushed out to the periphery, still less of a major talent thrust from its pinnacle by the whim of fashion and public taste, but

on his *Alexandria Quarterly*, which was to make him an international celebrity, a critical success, and, for the first time since his Corfu years, an author of independent means. How important this was to him comes over loud and clear; as do the high value he put on his developing intimacy with Aldington, his willingness to step in, to encourage and cajole at the merest suggestion of any project that would get Aldington back to serious work. But for all that the letters are still disturbingly one-sided: it is as if Durrell sensed the possibility of causing anguish to the grounded Aldington as they watched his own career take off.

Aldington everywhere effuses what is surely a genuine admiration for, and confidence in, the *Alexandria Quarterly* as he reads it book by book; but again, almost as if disturbed by a suspicion that Durrell's is a success which has more to do with "the literary world" than with literature (Durrell jokingly but unceasingly referring to "my middlebrow successes"), he over-compensates by constant assurances of his own estimation of Durrell's "genius" and his utter conviction of the younger writer's major stature: "You are the only one who matters". More worrying still (and one wonders how embarrassed by them Durrell was) are the wilder and more vociferous of Aldington's right-list posturings. On his admiration for Oswald Mosley, for example: "His old-time aping of the Fuehrer was a ghastly blunder, but he was never dangerous. Or, a few sentences later: 'A cholera epidemic confined to communists and New Statesman socialists would be a Very Good Thing'. And elsewhere: 'Let England stew in its own Jews'. Antisemitism recurs not only in connection with Mosley but

The controversy does not, perhaps, deserve resurrecting, but although there was undoubtedly an element of truth in this particular conspiracy theory, Aldington is seen and heard at his most fantastically self-pitying in pursuing it. Another note is the failure of the English (this error compounded by the Lady Chatterley trial) to recognize and adequately salute the achievement of D. H. Lawrence. There is a choice passage in which the obsessions are dovetailed together, and each fuels the intensity of the other:

What is the origin of this intense and prolonged persecution of D. H. L. when other writers get by, unscathed? First, of course, being only a bloody working man he had the incomparable impudence to possess genius instead of having attended Eton and Magdalene. Then he ran away with a prof's wife, instead of bugging camel boys in the sands of Arabia. Felix

There may be an insight here, but it leaves a nasty aftertaste.

ably rapid production of three of the *Quarrel's* four volumes. . . I'm wrestling with a brute [Hulthazar] trying to throw it off before end of June (only a few months after the wrestling bulletin, the incredible news I've nearly finished the new novel, 140,000 words!). Meanwhile, Durrell, humorist of the Diplomat Service, was in full flight: "I'm just knocking together the successor to *Expiré* [de Corps] . . . No wonder Durrell's letters are punctuated by 'Out!'s and 'Phew's'. 'Shop talk' is mostly restricted to the area roughly definable as higher gossip, and this probably accounts for the disappointing feel of the volume as a whole - lifelines maybe, but literary, hardly. Self-consciously Olympian utterances come easily to Durrell, though it's not easy to hear in their tone much besides an unmistakable pleasure in the sound of his own voice uttering them.

Durrell's "idens" are in some ways the most dubious thing about him. They are seldom original or persuasive; they suggest, rather, a combination of half-digested goblets of wisdom heavily seasoned with personal idiosyncrasy, or just plain whyness. The same recipe provides most of the fare in *A Smile in the Mind's Eye*, a short account of Durrell's re-education in the disciplines of the Tao through the effect of two close personal relationships. One of these was with a Chinese scholar resident in the West who brought the manuscript of his work on the Taoist philosophy of love and sex for Durrell to read and criticize before publication; the other was a love-affair with the girl Durrell names as Vega. The book is full of memorable anecdotes - such as that of the two men spending such ecstatic evenings, after sharing the cooking and eating of a meal combining French and vegetarian Chinese cuisines ("the two greatest in the world"), discussing the prolonging of life through refinement and control of the male orgasm (few ejaculations, more years of life, runs the argument in crude form). There are some amazing records of personal achievement, both in the sexual takes and in the consumption of wine (which Durrell, under Chang's guidance, brings down to a manageable-sounding level). But for all this, the seductiveness of Durrell's evocation of the ravishing, mysterious Vega and the spruce,

lively-minded and admirably self-disciplined Chang is not finally enough to persuade us of anything. Occasionally there is the excitement of a man wrestling with an overwhelming question or attaining some personal revelation, but the overall impression is of ideas being toyed with imaginatively, and being enjoyed for their suggestiveness and potency, rather than of an argument fully teased out.

This is of a piece with much of Durrell's work in prose, which conveys an air of extraordinary significance on the mythical or imaginary ramifications of a place, a moment in history, a personage; yet we never feel that we come to understand in any depth what that significance is. This picking up and nourishing of potent connotations is Durrell's substitute (any really interesting writer must have one) for "method", yet it is constantly threatening to become a mere vice of style, one which allows his heady concoctions to take on an air of profundity, of serious purpose behind the surface dazzle. But just as Durrell could be accused of trivializing the material - Alchemy to Zen, sexual mysticism or Eleusian mysteries - he picks up from ancient poetic traditions and religious disciplines, his "poetic" effects are often easily won, his fictions sustained by symbols, as he himself puts it with beguiling insight, "somehow crudely objectified". We may or may not be able to come to terms with the symbols - "Scobie by the way is Tiresias! . . . he has absolutely no connection with sodomy as such, but symbolizes (what high talk all this is) the unio mystica" (what high talk indeed) - but Durrell is wrong when he says that these "have to be so" - meaning crudely done - since novels are "written to be read".

A "receptiveness to ideas", as a previous reviewer termed it, an atmosphere of weighty though vague symbolic meaning, and the imprecisions of a diffused synaesthetic excitement, are similarly the stock-in-trade of Durrell's poems, in which he himself finds, with some justice, "a very true, slender voice, rather Gaudier-like". There is little trace of Gaudier's hard outlines, but we do find his rhythmical delicacy and firmness, and the linguistic verve which sustains a decorum of statement, of "things being said", yet is never

without a whiff of "decadence", or a dandyish luxuriating in the way of saying.

We are usually aware of the shadow of the mythical and historical past falling heavily across Durrell's poetry; and we are always aware of the strong sense of place. But his gift for the echoing phrase is not always an effective substitute for structure. Faced with too much confectionery - such a profusion of the exotic, of the world of sun, sea, rock, olive and cypress, and of a language crammed with strangely generalized detail (the particulars dissolve in the heat-haze of a tremendous truth or in the joyousness of an irresistible conceit as often as they declare themselves in the hard-edged clarity of Aegean light), the appetite begins to cloy; we choke on such nutritious images. Behind the gorgeousness there is, perhaps, too much of a hint of picture-postcard or guide-book reality for unqualified ascent: "Flower, with your pure assertion / Mythical and sea-born olive", "headlands . . . whose calm insoluble statues wear / Stone vines for hair, forever sharing / A sea-penumbra, the darkened arc / Where mythology walks in a wave / And the islands are". The ambiguity of adjectives like "mythical" and "insoluble" is typical of Durrell's rather slapdash verbalism, his carelessness in spluttering us with "effects", a word-drunkness which is only intermittently telling or infectious. More worrying still is this in "Letter to Sefiris the Greek".

I have no fear for the land / Of the dark heads with aimed noses. The hair of night and the voices / Which mimic a traditional laughter; Nor for a new language where / A mole upon a dark throat / Of a girl is called an olive. All these things are simply Greece. Well, perhaps. Yet elsewhere we come upon such images as "islands . . . / Struck like soft songs in the amazing blue"; or "Far out on the blue / Like notes of music on a page / The two heads: the man and his wife". In these *trouvailles* we do see and feel the heart of Durrell's chosen world; as "the lucky tree in summer / (Tie up their boats, they offer a momentary and delicious anchorage)"; or, tempting us, as the Aegean itself does, "To enter April, like swimmer". To enter temptations are everywhere, in Durrell's poetry, and it seems pointless

to argue that he might be a consistently better poet had he resisted them more often. They should not, anyway, blind us to the vein of strong and pure lyricism that is tapped by sparer rhythms and more stringent structures. When this happens both setting and feeling are more sharply evoked, as in the marvellous "On Ithaca Standing" (*Je en un Autre*), "At Corinth", "Carol on Corfu" ("let flesh falter, or let bone break / Break, yet the salt of a poem holds on, / Even in empty weather / When beak and feather have done"), "Water Music" ("Wrap your sulky beauty up . . ."), "Alexandria" and many others. Beyond the evidence of Durrell's exquisite ear there is the hardness and brilliance of the landscapes his imagination has "grown into" - what Peter Levi called the "mineral quality" of his words.

There is more, too, than visual impressionism; an attempt to "Match passion and clarity", which Durrell in a late poem calls "that hopeless task" but which his best pieces continue to do into the 1960s and 1970s. The later poems here introduce a darker, elegiac tone into what is, most memorably and insistently, an act of celebration - of places, certainly, but also of people, most importantly women. Durrell wrote in "Logos" (1939) that

Woman Can be a wilderness enough for body To wander in: is a true human Genesis and exodus. A serious fate.

and his poems chart the course of that "serious fate" with sharpness and poignancy; though to do it they have to get beyond his erotic sentimentality, and a Dali-esque surrealism of sinister, more or less satirical associations. When Durrell tries to cross this half-hearted surrealism, all ellipses and outrageous juxtapositions, with the Elizabethan violent metaphors, rapidly, roughness and density of texture, the result, though it yields the occasional bizarre or haunting line, has neither the immediacy of "There's a plumber laying pipes in my guts, it scalds", nor the graceful wit and strangeness of "La terre est bleue comme une orange / J'aimais un erreur les mots ne mentent pas". But in lyrics such as "Channel", "Episode", (earlows tasting of salt / A dying language / Of perfume, and the heart of someone / Hanging open on its hinges like a gate"), or "Notebook",

we glimpse the same vindication of Durrell's wandering among the foreign, the exotic or the simply ancient and unfamiliar. Durrell is with Robert Graves as one of the finest love-poets of this century. Echoes of Graves, and more insistently of Eliot, Auden, Yeats, do not merely signal Durrell's debts; they have stiffened and strengthened a "slender" voice which started with the fragile spell of late-Romantic incantations and phrases such as "those frail and tenebrous hands", "into an art somehow akin to that building of dry-stone walls which Durrell so heartily recommends in the letters. There may be little "technique" (it is not hard to feel that some poems have a tendency to run on when the impulse behind them is gone) yet the finished thing can seem strangely solid and durable.

Durrell is most truly "himself" in such pieces, perhaps more so than in the long sequences of poem-portraits of "Eternal Contemporaries", of "Aspects of Melissa", of "Cities, Plains and People" - some "real", some imaginary in which, precisely because he exercises most freedom, the poems lose their way among symbolic labyrinths and tantalizing fragments. Exceptions are "Fangbrand", "The Anecdotes", and the memorable "Death of Uncle Unce-bunke" ("not satire but an exercise in ironic compassion"), in which Durrell invented a poetic idiom as well as a "character", a language by turns exuberantly funny and gravely portentous. It is in the later "Deus Loci", though -

scattering down the eaves like sparrow-shatters the reapers, the sunburst girls, rises in the sour dust of this table these books, unfinished letters - all refreshed again in you O spirit of place, Presence long since deprived, delayed, and waited for, And here met face to face.

the resonance of cadence and image, the rightness of a disciplined rhetoric come together in a major achievement. And in lines from "On first Looking into Loeb's Horace":

The fruit-trees dropping apple: he counted them; The soft bounding fruit on leafy terraces, And turned to the consoling winter rooms Where, facing south, began the great prayer.

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we glimpse the same vindication of Durrell's wandering among the foreign, the exotic or the simply ancient and unfamiliar. Durrell is with Robert Graves as one of the finest love-poets of this century. Echoes of Graves, and more insistently of Eliot, Auden, Yeats, do not merely signal Durrell's debts; they have stiffened and strengthened a "slender" voice which started with the fragile spell of late-Romantic incantations and phrases such as "those frail and tenebrous hands", "into an art somehow akin to that building of dry-stone walls which Durrell so heartily recommends in the letters. There may be little "technique" (it is not hard to feel that some poems have a tendency to run on when the impulse behind them is gone) yet the finished thing can seem strangely solid and durable.

Durrell is most truly "himself" in such pieces, perhaps more so than in the long sequences of poem-portraits of "Eternal Contemporaries", of "Aspects of Melissa", of "Cities, Plains and People" - some "real", some imaginary in which, precisely because he exercises most freedom, the poems lose their way among symbolic labyrinths and tantalizing fragments. Exceptions are "Fangbrand", "The Anecdotes", and the memorable "Death of Uncle Unce-bunke" ("not satire but an exercise in ironic compassion"), in which Durrell invented a poetic idiom as well as a "character", a language by turns exuberantly funny and gravely portentous. It is in the later "Deus Loci", though -

scattering down the eaves like sparrow-shatters the reapers, the sunburst girls, rises in the sour dust of this table these books, unfinished letters - all refreshed again in you O spirit of place, Presence long since deprived, delayed, and waited for, And here met face to face.

the resonance of cadence and image, the rightness of a disciplined rhetoric come together in a major achievement. And in lines from "On first Looking into Loeb's Horace":

The fruit-trees dropping apple: he counted them; The soft bounding fruit on leafy terraces, And turned to the consoling winter rooms Where, facing south, began the great prayer.

Princess Ida, the Amazons and a women's college curriculum

By Mary R. Lefkowitz

This is the text of an inaugural lecture recently given at Wellesley College, Massachusetts.

My title describes a poem, a myth, and an educational problem that have each claimed considerable space in current feminist criticism. The poem is Tennyson's *The Princess* (1857-61), which describes the creation and demise of a women's college; the story was parodied by Gilbert and Sullivan in the comic opera *Princess Ida* a generation after Tennyson's poem was published. In *The Princess* Tennyson described a "university for maidens": modelled on the lines of an Oxford college, but run entirely for and by women. Only the founder of the college, Princess Ida, is strong enough to abide by the rules of celibacy and withdrawal she has set and in the end even she is called back to a woman's normal role as wife and mother, not by brute male force but by a natural dependency on men and an instinctive female desire to nurture. My summary makes the poem sound like ordinary Victorian cant, but in fact Tennyson portrays the Princess's vision with great sympathy and complexity. Feminist writers today have returned to the poem because the founders of the great women's colleges knew it, and because Tennyson describes with such clarity the principal problems of feminism not only in his own time, but in ours as well.

The Princess seeks first to have an environment that expresses the ideals of her institution. The statues in the great hall of her women's college are not of those men desire, Sleek Odaliscus, nor oracles of mode, Nor stunted squaws of West or East, but she That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she The Carian Artemisia strong in war, The Rhodope that built the pyramid, Cleopatra, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene That taught Aurelian, and the Roman Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose Convention . . . O, lift your natures up; Embrace our aims; work out your freedom. (ll. 62-75)

As we know from our own library, the Princess's choice of statuary is most unconventional. In 1913, doors were chosen for the Wellesley College library with figures representing Wisdom (Sappho), rather oddly, a bearded old man with a book; and Charity (Caritas), represented by a woman comforting a naked child. These doors were flanked (and still are) by matronly statues of Athena and Hestia, "so that the goddess of wisdom was balanced by the goddess of the hearth". The Princess by contrast picked women of accomplishment, rulers, builders, a general like Artemisia or the intrepid Cleopatra who swam the Tiber, Cornelia, who educated her sons the Gracchi, and Agrippina, who stood up to the emperor Tiberius. But her speech describing them also shows a certain narrowness of vision: Rhodope that built the pyramid - if she did indeed build the pyramid, which Herodotus denies - made her fortune as a courtesan.

Tennyson, or rather his narrator, the Prince Hilarion in female disguise, doesn't comment on these inconsistencies; he is much more impressed by the beauty of the students than by the statues. But he manages to summarize a lecture that might serve as a syllabus for a present-day popular survey of Women's History. The lesson begins with a Darwinian account of man's evolution (omitting Adam and Eve), beginning with the cave man "crushing down his mate"; then the lecturer, Lady Psyche, glanced at the legendary Amazon As emblematic of a nobler age; Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those

that lay 'at wine with Lar and Lucumo before briefly characterizing and criticizing more recent civilizations, and finally prophesying a future in which men and women would work together. As in the case of the statues, the most positive models are drawn from the Graeco-Roman past: the Amazons who ruled themselves and fought wars like men; the Lyones, where people were said to be known by their mother's rather than their father's name and whose citizenship is determined by their mother's status; and finally Cleopatra (again), the girl who swam the Tiber and was praised even by her enemy Lars Porcenna, and Tanaxquil, the domineering wife of Rome's fifth king, the Etruscan Lucumo or Tarquinus. Of these "role models" the Amazons especially have enjoyed recent notoriety.

Phyllis Chesler devoted a short



section of her best-selling book *Women and Madness* (1972) to a description of Amazon society, which she unquestioningly treats as historical. "Amazon society", she claims, "was probably better for the development of women's bodies and emotions than any male-dominated society has ever been. It may have been better for the development of women's intellect and art - although this remains a totally conjectural matter". Her source of information about the Amazons is a single book, Helen Diner's *Mothers and Amazons: the First Feminine History of Culture*, a work originally written in German that was first circulated in English in the 1930s under the pseudonym of "Sir Galahad". Diner claims to have consulted the ancient sources, but the way she refers to ancient historians shows that she has no notion of when they lived or whether their works still survive. Her elaborate and imaginative reconstruction of Amazon society appears to have been inspired primarily by the Swiss jurist Johann Jakob Bachofen's influential treatise, *Mother Right: an investigation of the religious and juridical character of matriarchy in the ancient world*, first published in 1861. Bachofen argued that women had been the first governors of ancient societies. His work was based on a careful and comprehensive survey of the scattered references in the ancient sources to Amazons and to matrilineal customs (i.e. societies in which descent and property rights are traced through the female line).

Phyllis Chesler's book, like Lady Psyche's lecture, uses history to encourage social change, and clearly doesn't pretend to be a dispassionate or "scientific" account of women's mental health. But it is interesting that like Lady Psyche she needs to find a classical model for her new society. Whether the Amazons are an appropriate choice is another question. Chesler clearly has given some thought to the subject; in addition to quoting extensively from Diner, she thinks a staff member at the Whitney Museum of American Art for her suggestions about goddesses and Amazons. But she apparently did not investigate what historians and anthropologists today think of Bachofen's work and about myths of

matriarchy. If one begins by examining why and when ancient authors and artists refer to Amazons and to civilizations in which women were said to have played a dominant role, it becomes clear that to the Greeks descriptions of such societies were meant not so much to represent history as we think of it, but rather to offer negative examples of what would happen if women ever managed to get control. In other words, the ancient sources indicate that the rule of women never existed, however much Lady Psyche or Phyllis Chesler might desire an ancient precedent to validate their own aspirations.

At first there appears to be some evidence for Bachofen's theory: Herodotus in the fifth century ac speaks of an Amazon society, the Saurimatæ, in Scythia, where women hunt on horseback alongside of men, often wear men's clothes,

were interested in recording history, or facts (as we think of them), rather than attitudes or moral lessons. I would argue that it did not matter to most ancient writers whether they had actually seen or had access to an eyewitness account; they were concerned much more with describing enduring characteristics and establishing general truths about human experience. In that Hippocratic treatise *Airs, Waters, Places*, the information about the Amazons' life is included among a series of anecdotes that explain why Asians are weaker (i.e. more effeminate) than Greeks: another, since the Asians are generally ruled by despots; then follows the description of the Amazons, and then of the strange customs of the other Scythians. Herodotus puts his account of the Amazons into a general description of Scythia, "a country no part of which is cultivated, and in which there is not a single inhabited city", a land beyond the pale, with strange customs, that are certainly interesting and occasionally admirable but in general monstrously inferior to those of the Greeks. It is important to note that every feature of Amazonian society has a direct antithesis in ordinary Greek practice. In ancient Greece, women did not hunt or go to war; women's initiation rites did not involve exposure to physical danger; they nursed their children and stayed at home.

Only two aspects of Amazon life are not so much inversions of ordinary practice as grotesque exaggerations of Amazonian character: that Amazon mothers cut off the right breast of female babies, and fed their infants with reptiles rather than mother's milk. Apparently no ancient writer had ever seen any of these practices, because the Amazons represented in art always have both breasts, and of course, their race (assuming that they existed in the first place) would never have survived on lizard juice. The bizarre details therefore do not represent reality, but explain why these warrior women are called Amazons and Saurimatæ; *a-* means *un-* or *no*; *mazon* means breasts; *sauris* is the Greek word for lizard. Almost certainly the names Amazons and Saurimatæ are not Greek to begin with, and have nothing to do with either breasts or lizards. They are probably only phonetic representations of foreign names in Greek; the Greeks preferred to explain loan-words in their own language, even at the cost of straining credibility. For example, the story of being born from sea foam (*aphros*) explains the name Aphrodite (another loan-word); her son is called Anelais because she had terrible (*ainos*) grief on account of him.

In literature and art the Amazons consistently represent a dangerous "other", that must be conquered and controlled by the forces of civilization. Several heroes fight against them: Bellerophon (on Pegasus) and the young Perseus. One of Hercules' celebrated labours was to bring back the girdle of the queen of the Amazons. Athenian vase-painters, when depicting this expedition, gave more credit to their own city's hero,

Theseus, than to Hercules. Theseus was often depicted repelling an invasion of Attica by Amazons, who had come to claim their sister Antiope (or Hippolyte) who had been carried off by Theseus. For all their strength and skill, the Amazons always lose their battles against male heroes; the Trojans have high hopes for Penthesilea and her friends, who come just where the *liad* ends, to help them, but Achilles kills her on her very first day in the field. The statue of Athena Parthenos on the Acropolis, now lost but in its day one of the seven wonders of the world, had on the outer surface of its shield a relief of the battle of Greece against Amazons, and on the inside the battle of the gods against giants. On the metopes of the Parthenon a battle of Greeks against Amazons was paired with the battle of Greeks against the monstrous centaurs. On the temple of Apollo Epikourios at Bassae in Arcadia a frieze (now in the British Museum) of Theseus fighting the Amazons was matched by a frieze of the Lapiths (a Thessalian tribe) fighting the centaurs. In each case the Amazons are classified with the established enemies of law and order, giants and centaurs. Accordingly, in every pictorial representation of conflict, they are shown being defeated.

Women appear in other Greek myths in armed conflict with men - I am using myth in the Greek sense to mean a story about something remote in space and/or time that the teller of the story has not actually witnessed. In the *Iliad* Diomedes tells the story of how his ancestor Lyncurgus pursued the women followers of Dionysus on an ox-goad; in Euripides' *Bacchae* Pentheus wants to send the army after the women of Thebes, who have escaped to the mountains, but when (male) farmers and herdsmen try to stop the women, the women attack and defeat them, and eventually kill Pentheus, when he dons women's garb to try to spy on them. Female worshippers of Dionysus or Maenads ("the possessed") are shown fighting off male satyrs intent on raping them. Bennett Simon, in his recent book *Mind and Madness*, sees in these myths representations of the psychological conflict produced by the customary segregation of the sexes in Athenian society and men's apprehensiveness about female sexuality. But this is to put an emphasis on sex that is more appropriate to our own time than to classical antiquity. The point of the myths is rather that all female groups formed by withdrawal from or hatred of ordinary family life are considered dangerous and destructive. The Greeks, male and female, would have been amazed that Lady Psyche chose the Amazons as "emblematic of a nobler age"; to them Amazons represented one of the best arguments for retaining a status quo in which groups composed exclusively of either sex were not permitted continuously to segregate themselves from society.

In her history lesson Lady Psyche (we are now back to Tennyson's poem) also praises the "Lycian custom", according to Herodotus unique among the world's people, of taking the mother's rather than the father's name and status. Herodotus, of course, did not know about all the other nations of the world from actual anthropological surveys; his account of Lycian practice simply represents the opposite of the standard practice of the Greeks. The same can be said about his description of the marvels of Egypt where the people, in most of their manners and customs, exactly reverse the common practice of mankind. Women do the marketing (this wouldn't seem odd to us, but in ancient Greece men or male slaves did the shopping); men work the loom; women urinate standing up, men sitting down, daughters must

A decent manliness

By Jonathan Keates

ROBIN GILMOUR:
The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel
190pp, George Allen and Unwin. £10. 0 04 800005 1

The *nouveau snobisme* of the late 1970s and early 80s, with its attendant phenomena of born-again Tories, embattled public schools and the appeal of advertising and television to a rather vague notion of "a return to traditional values", has postulated the resurrection of the gentleman. Quite what is now meant by the term it is hard to say. Does "A Gentleman's Cologne" or "A Gentleman's Shampoo" suggest that the user will be a man of modest integrity, profoundly sensitive to the feelings of others, disdainful of humbug and exercising a dignified consideration towards those in lower stations of life? Or a somewhat more serious level, do those curious little books, recently published, called *The English Gentleman* and *The English Gentleman's Wife* (who is apparently no longer a lady) and *The English Gentleman's Child* take such values for granted as part of their crisply detailed package for successfully simulating a toff?

In certain respects they are much closer (sometimes quite sinisterly so) to the Chestertonian view of the issue, so thoroughly un-English in its stress on politeness and *bella figura* and in its naked admissions of artifice and performance. The Earl's letters, cheerfully vilified by the nineteenth century ("I would not bathe in the same river with Lord C" wrote Keats, "though I had the upper hand of the stream: I am

grieved that in writing and speaking it is necessary to make use of the same periphrases as he did") have now regained their topicality, so that the throwaway nonchalance of a remark like "Every man is to be had one way or another, and every woman almost any way" seems more than usually pertinent.

Gone, on the other hand, is precisely what the Victorians berated Chesterton for not possessing, the quality of "manliness" conveyed initially by a loud laugh and a hearty handshake, that peculiar species of roaring bluster in which Trollope and Browning, among others, seem to have been adept. Trollope, indeed, centres his credo on such a cult of sincerity. It was he, after all, who set Shakespeare apart from the other Jacobean dramatists for his reflection of "the manliness of true decency" (one wonders whose edition the novelist was in the habit of reading) and who made his model gentleman, Plantagenet Palliser, confer the final accolade on the impoverished Frank Tregear in *The Duke's Children* by declaring that "he is a mainly young man". It is mainly of Johnny Ranges to rescue Lord de Guest from the bull, just as it is mainly of Frank Gresham to horsewhip Mr Moffat on the steps of his club and of Henry Granly to think of going and living at Pau in order to forget Grace Crawley.

Much of this was what Trollope had selectively adopted as part of his lifelong enthusiasm for Thackeray. Robin Gilmour could have made more of such a link, as also of the ambiguities in the respective social backgrounds of both writers which provided, each, not merely with abundant narrative resource, but with a focal point for their most arresting work. In a boldly comprehensive chapter on *Great Expectations*, forming a successful centrepiece to the book, Gilmour accounts fully for the relationship between Pip and his creator, but the horrors of the blacking factory have their parallel in the shabby, improvident hopelessness of Trollope's childhood as sketched in the *Autobiography* and in the very fact that Thackeray needed to be a writer at all, a reality which grated to the last. "It is impossible to appreciate either his philosophy, his style or his literary position", wrote a friend, "without remembering that he was a well-born, well-bred, and well-educated gentleman". Exactly for these reasons, Gilmour cogently suggests, Thackeray's talent is still far too warily acknowledged.

Part of the difficulty is that much of Thackeray's best work, such as *The Book of Snobs*, *Rebecca and Rowena* and *A Little Dinner at Timon's*, is either buried in collected editions or else rests the easy categorizations beloved by planners of courses or literary annuals. *Vanity Fair*, however, has crept back onto the syllabus and the reading list, and Gilmour now adds a valuable new dimension by viewing the work within the context of the silver-fork and dandy novels which its author had earlier parodied in *Punch*. Dobbin the tradesman's son, with his yellow face, hissing voice and clumsy feet, challenges the prim and proper, post-Byronic languors of Pelham and Vivian Grey, presenting the risqué of *The Cornhill* and *Household Words* to *The Keepers* and *The Book of Beauty*. Yet the ambivalence remains, embedded within the novel's historical framework, which both invites us to shudder with relief at having abandoned the universe of the silver-fork and dandy, and yet, selfishly, shudders, and defies us to accept the rapid, clinging Amelia in

exchange for Becky, a flamboyant, unregenerate child of the Regency, her metamorphosis from the slattern in the Pumpernickel boarding house to the patroness of provincial charity bazaars being merely a further evidence of her raw genius for survival.

Dobbin's role as an example of the gentleman is limited, for much of the book, to that of bystander and go-between. Gilmour's admirably and unusually sympathetic treatment of *Pendennis* illustrates Thackeray's subsequent failure to expand his creation in terms of a difference between what he feels is good for his readers and his own potent hankering for the rejected world of Brummel and D'Orsay. It was left to Dickens, in *Great Expectations*, to argue most convincingly that a gentleman could be developed along lines which had nothing to do with traditional notions of blood and nurture the notions which other novelists, however critically, acquiesced in. Gilmour rightly stresses the variety of historical perspectives within the narrative (including its increasingly ironical links with the silver-fork milieu embodied in Drummle and the Pockets) as supporting a broader view of a crude, brutalizing past, with its Orlicks, Mrs Joes and Pumblechooks, from which Pip's gentility evolves miraculously, as it were, its origins eternally rediscovered in the spectre of Magwitch and the muffled reproaches of Bladdy.

It is perhaps pressing the case too strenuously to identify *Great Expectations* specifically as "this fable of 'social' evolution" but, Gilmour, with an elegant persuasiveness of manner which seems to have taken something from his intelligent reading of Disraeli, Bulwer-Lytton and Mrs Gore, establishes the work as the ultimate expression of ideals

whose standardizing and codifying by the public schools was to make gentlemanship obtainable, rapidly enough at a price by those at whom the squire of Trollope and the swells of Thackeray would have raised a polite eyebrow. The subject is one which, central though it is to our fullest apprehension of the governing paradoxes of nineteenth-century civilization, has never been adequately tackled before and an author's approach communicates authority, eloquence and, most important, an obvious relish in the nature and breadth of his sources. There is more, certainly, to be said about Trollope in this connection (in *The Way We Live Now*, for example, why is Hetta Carbury awarded, not to her cousin Roger, that insufferable repository of antique virtues, but to the altogether more questionable Paul Montague?) and Jane Austen and George Eliot need building in more closely, yet the substance of Gilmour's book remains a firmly handled and perceptive confrontation of a theme which has been neglected for too long.

Person and Persona: Studies in Shakespeare's (141pp, Cardiff: University of Wales Press. Paperback £3.95. 0 7083 0784 1) by Gwyn Williams is a collection of essays, most of them previously published, but here gathered together with an introduction for the first time. Among the essays are "Seals of Love" about the bonds which represent public relationships, "Sea-storm, Tide Imagery and Mutiny in Shakespeare" (the culmination of this set of associations to be found in *The Tempest*), "The Comedy of Errors rescued from Tragedy", "Welshmen in Shakespeare's Stratford", "Black Beauty in Shakespeare" and "The Loneliness of the Homosexual in Shakespeare".

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support their parents, they write letters from right to left.

His description does not represent an eyewitness account, but serves primarily as an illustration of the foreignness of Egypt. For the Lycians also the other evidence we have suggests that maternity was no more significant for them than for other peoples. In Homer (ie, the earliest reference we have to Lycians) the Lycian Glaucus explains who he is by tracing the male lines of his ancestry. His cousin Sarpedon is chief of the Lycians at Troy, rather than Glaucus himself, not because Sarpedon was the son of the hero Bellerophon's daughter, while Glaucus was son of his son, but because Sarpedon was the son of the king of the gods, Zeus. Inscriptions from Lycia have recently been found, but they too reveal no trace whatever of a matrilineal system of descent.

Aristotle states explicitly that the "Lycian custom" that Lady Psyche praises would have been interpreted by Greeks as a sign of decadence; to Aristotle, the rule of women (or *gynaikekratia*) was a sign of how democracies tended to turn into tyrannies; women get out of hand, wives are permitted to inform against their husbands. The Lycians, according to a summary of Aristotle's account of their government, "are all pirates. They have no written laws, only customs, and have long since been under the rule of women. They sell false witness together with their property". The third-century BC poet Apollonius of Rhodes says explicitly that the Amazons "do not respect the laws of the gods". According to Aristotle's pupil Clearchus (who lived about the same time as Apollonius) a final reason why the Lydians (not Lycians) could be considered decadent was that they had been ruled by a woman, Omphale; she had been raped by Lydian men, and in revenge forced respectable women to have intercourse with slaves; this same Omphale was said to have purchased as a slave the greatest Greek hero, Hercules, and to have made him her lover.

Mythologies of patriarchy in other cultures serve a similar function. Joan Bamberger, formerly of the Wellesley College anthropology department, has shown that myths about the rule of women from two culturally distinct areas, Tierra del Fuego at the extreme south-west tip of South America and the tropical forests of north-west Amazon and central Brazil, are also intended as negative examples. In both cultures women are said to have been the first to rule over the land and have owned all the emblems of power; but they ruled without mercy and justice. (Remember that Apollonius of Rhodes, writing in Alexandria in the third century BC, described the Amazons on the shore of the Black Sea as "not gentle and not respecting of established laws"). Then suddenly in both South American myths the situation is reversed; the women are driven out, excluded from the secrets of power, and kept for ever after subordinate. This change-over is also celebrated in ritual. The myths "constantly reiterate that women did not know how to handle power when they had it". They do not represent actual history but instead explain the way things are. "The Rule of Women", Bamberger concludes, "instead of heralding a promising future, harks back to a past darkened with repeated failures. If, in fact, women are ever going to rule, they must rid themselves of the myth that states they have been proved unworthy of leadership roles".

A first step in the process of cultural liberation for women will be to understand that the Greek myth of the Amazons serves the same purpose as the South American, and not to continue playing with the notion that part of it, that is, the part that we or Lady Psyche might like, is historical. Of course it is much easier to accept that South American myth is unhistorical. Greek authors present their material in such reasonable and rational form that it takes some time to realize how greatly their research methodology (if we can call it that) differs from ours. In the sixth century Greeks travelled to Thracia, the Thracian river, on the south shore of the Black Sea, the land that, in seventh-century AD, supported their parents, they write letters from right to left.

poetry had been inhabited by Amazons there, they did not give up their belief in the Amazons' existence, but rather thought of the Amazons as being located in a part of the world that had not been explored, namely the uncivilized land of Scythia (ie, what we now call southern Russia); other accounts put them in Ethiopia or places they had heard of but where no one had actually been.

Since we are accustomed to think of Herodotus as the founder of modern history, it may at first be difficult to appreciate how different the Greek view of reality is from ours; to us, a thing either exists, empirically, or it is imaginary; if archaeologists turned up evidence of women's armour near Thermopylae we would believe in the existence of Amazons but not otherwise. The Greeks instead thought in terms of probability (what they called *eikos*, what is fitting or likely), and did not distinguish between the remote and recent past, or accord more credibility to what could be demonstrated than to what could be vividly described (even at third hand). In relating an account of a past event, an author was free to remove or add details to render his story more probable. This attitude has contributed greatly to modern confusion about the relationship of ancient myth and history.

Orators in Athens, for example in the fourth century BC, treated the story of the Amazons' invasion of Attica in the same way as the Persian invasion of 480. The Athenians' victory over the Amazons came to be regarded as their first major civic achievement. The orator Lycurgus, in a speech for the war dead in 359, depicts the Amazons in many respects as formidable enemies: they were the first to wear iron armour and to ride on horseback; they had conquered all their neighbours; but when matched with our Athenian ancestors they appeared in all the natural timidity of their sex, and showed themselves less women in their external appearance than in their weakness and cowardice. All were killed on the spot. (Funeral oration, 4-6.) Other writers, less concerned with praising the state in general, described the battle in ways that explained the position of various monuments, such as the Amazonium, various tombs and a column outside the city gate near Phaleron commemorating the Amazon Antiope or Hippolyta (ie, Theseus' consort), who according to some authorities was killed there, and according to others lived to establish the Amazonium at Troezen. Exact strategic and topographical details of the battle were provided by Cleidemus, author of an early history of Attica; we might wonder from what sources (other than his own imagination) he derived them. But Plutarch, in his *Life of Theseus*, illustrates how an ancient author approaches his source material: he gives the most space to Cleidemus, because of the detail his account preserves; Plutarch adds other information when it corresponds to existing monuments in Athens and elsewhere; he copes with contradictions (such as differences as to where and when Antiope died) by giving both versions, and observes "it is hardly surprising that history should go astray when it has to deal with events so remote as these".

Bachofen's approach to the evidence is no less eclectic than Plutarch's. His premises were, of course, more elaborate. He assumed that myth represented if not a precise record of specific institutions at least a general impression of cultural practice, enduring characteristics and human psychology. Scholars in his day had become increasingly interested in discovering the common grounds among civilizations of different times and places. Artists (Wagner is the obvious example) sought to recapture in their own language and customs impressions of their vanished heritage. There was in particular increased awareness of women's role in society; Tennyson's *The Princess* was published in the same year as *Mother Right*. Bachofen spoke of discovering in myth fixed and recognizable laws, among them the notion that in primitive societies woman could be seen to exercise over man a powerful religious and magical influence, so that even though she was physically weaker, she was able to ensure the

continuity of her sense of social values. One suspects that his notion of ancient realities was based on a contemporary appreciation of the role of women in his own society, and that the fixed laws he saw in the confused and contradictory record of the past were the patterns he most wanted to find. His work had wide influence: Nietzsche was familiar with it, and Engels adopted the idea of early patriarchy because it gave support to the notion that the earliest (ie, natural) form of human existence had been communal.

Bachofen's theories would be of purely antiquarian interest were it not that they continue to be taken seriously by certain leading feminists. I have already mentioned Phyllis Chesler, whose reliance on a single secondary source would not have earned her a high grade in any Wesleyan history course. Kate Millet's discussion of patriarchy is far more sophisticated; she quotes directly from Bachofen's text (without the confused elaborations of Diner); she sees his work in its cultural context. But although she capably summarizes the main lines of Bachofen's arguments, she does not have the technical training she needs properly to evaluate his use of ancient evidence. It would be tempting to say that she wants so much to believe in patriarchy that she does not care to look too closely; certainly it is interesting that she is most willing to accept what Bachofen has to say about Greek evidence - one suspects once again the instinctive need of the revolutionary for a Greek precedent.

Millet in her discussion of patriarchy moves almost imperceptibly from critique to recapitulation of Bachofen's claim that the discovery of patriarchy was a key factor in the shift from matriarchy to patriarchy, and uses as evidence Bachofen's own example, Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. Millet describes the drama as a conflict between patriarchal and patriarchal forces, in which patriarchal forces win the day by the specious argument that the real parent of the child is the father, while the mother is merely a vehicle for carrying the seed from which the child grows. The patriarchal forces, represented by the hideous Furies, capitulate without much of a struggle. In her summary Millet cites from Aeschylus the passages Bachofen chose to emphasize in his discussion. These quotations, in the English version of *Mother Right*, are given in Richmond Lattimore's translation, which keeps close to the original text. But Millet prefers to quote from a "translation" of the *Oresteia* that she says strikes her as being "closer in spirit to the original". Which original? The translation she cites is not a translation at all but a stage adaptation of Lattimore's version. In Aeschylus's work the Furies are "Do you down your mother's dear blood?", ie, the blood from and in which he was born; Lattimore's adaptation, which Millet supposes is closer in spirit to the Greek, reads "Do you deny that you were born of woman?" and shifts the emphasis of the original from blood-relationship to gender. Lattimore's adaptation might seem more authentic to someone who does not know Greek because it stresses issues of human civilization tends to think significant, male versus female, judicial procedures vs witch-hunts, rational vs irrational. If Millet had been able to understand what Aeschylus actually wrote, I doubt if she would have found it so encouraging.

In the original, the Furies do not give in nearly so easily as Millet (or Bachofen) supposes, nor does the argument about patriarchy easily carry the day. As Aeschylus puts it, the Athenian jury is split evenly so that Athens has to cast the deciding vote. That she votes in favour of the parent would come as no surprise to the Athenian audience; Athens herself is subordinate to her father, Zeus, and in Athens, as in most places, the father's status determined the status of the child. But another deciding factor, which Millet fails to quote, is that Clytemnestra is not just an ordinary woman, but "one who slew her husband, the watcher of the house". The Furies in this play give great importance to Clytemnestra's role as mother because they are representing her as a murderer; had we seen them on stage when they were pur-

suing Clytemnestra or Aegisthus for the murder of Agamemnon, they would have emphasized other aspects of the importance of blood-relationships. Athena persuades them to play a more positive role in the administration of justice by promising them great honour, *time*, which also means material recompense in the form of sacrifice and powers, the sort of thing the Christian god might not care about but no Greek god would ever disdain. Far from being suppressed, as Bachofen supposed, the Furies' great strength is recognized, since it is only with their support that Athens will maintain her judicial system and her political and economic importance.

In drawing on the *Eumenides* as evidence, Millet and Bachofen both forgot that they were dealing not with a historical document of transcripts of an interview but with a drama, and if Apollo or Athena gives special prominence to patriarchy, they are speaking as characters in a play and not as representatives of Athenian society as a whole. Certainly no Athenian would assume that any lawyer, even when he claimed to be stating the "law", was doing anything more than explaining how he understood the "law" or *nomos* - which was continually subject to reinterpretation or change. Millet states that she is exercising a criticism "which takes into account the larger cultural context in which literature is conceived and produced". But I find it profoundly depressing that an accomplished scholar of contemporary literature should feel herself competent to interpret and expound an ancient text whose language she does not know and whose culture she has studied only partially and at second hand. She should have remembered Olive Chancellor's advice in James's *The Bastioniers* - still one of the most profound commentaries on women's struggle for independence. "The change in the dreadful position of women was not a question for today simply, or for to-morrow, but for many years to come; and there would be a great deal to think of, to map out. One thing they were determined upon - that men shouldn't taunt them with being superficial."

In the end, it seems safe to say only that cultural theories tell us more about the theorists than about the culture they describe. An example is the importance Bachofen and Engels gave to the discovery of patriarchy; they presumed that mothers in early society had primary importance because maternity was certain where patriarchy was not, and it was only after the father's role in sexual intercourse was completely understood that men assumed control of society. Malinowski's work seems to confirm that certain "ignorant" or primitive tribes did not know where babies came from; but it has been shown since that the real ignorance was displayed not by the natives but by the anthropologists who failed to understand the purpose of their myths - think of what one could conclude about our understanding of intercourse from a literal interpretation of the story of the Annunciation! If Kate Millet's "pioneering" work is representative, as it is often taken to be, of the new cross-cultural methodology of women's studies, we might now ask what her theories say about us. Her interpretation of the *Oresteia* tells us not so much about Aeschylus or fifth-century attitudes as what she feels to be the central issue of our time, the domination of women by men and women's unquestioning acceptance of the roles imposed upon them.

Concentration on our problems can lead to ingenious distortions, even by feminists who know Greek. From Zeitlin, Professor of Classics at Princeton, argues that in the *Oresteia* purification with pig's blood (by symbolic association with the female genitalia) represents a rebirth that breaks the original bond between the child Orestes and his mother Clytemnestra. By concentrating on male-female conflict within the drama, she has lost sight of the function of pig's blood used at Delphi to cleanse and murder of blood-guilt. Since the victim was usually not the murderer's mother, what did pig's blood symbolize then?

Let me provide just one more illustration of the dangers inherent in a "multi-disciplinary" and "cross-cultural" approach. In her book *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny*, Carolyn Heilbrun, Professor of English at Columbia, seeks to show that women in Western literature have played a more active role and more successfully than has often been supposed. In the case of nineteenth and twentieth-century fiction it is possible to describe critical reaction and authorial intention; but when Heilbrun deals with classical texts, at the very beginning of her book, she is compelled to guess what Sophocles or Aeschylus had in mind by comparing the action in their dramas to ordinary patterns of behaviour as expressed in "myth". By "patterns" she means more or less the way things are done in patriarchal society as described by Bachofen and further developed in the psychology of Freud. Oedipus in Sophocles' play is better able to understand feminine existence after he has blinded, ie, castrated or crippled himself, so that he is dependent on others, like a woman; dramas such as Sophocles' *Antigone* also may be seen as attempts to show that one can survive best by incorporating both masculine and feminine principles of existence, like the prophet Teiresias, who in Hellenistic tradition was said to have been a woman for part of his life. Such psychological interpretations as these have immediate appeal and can be reached without special approval; Heilbrun notes with approval that the interesting suggestion that Oedipus attempted to rediscover the feminine in himself by killing his father and marrying his mother had been proposed by a student in a seminar on Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*.

Heilbrun's ideas make better sense when one keeps a safe distance from the text (in English, let alone in Greek). Neither in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* nor in the *Antigone* does Sophocles mention the story of how Teiresias had been a woman, though perhaps he knew it. He would not have regarded Antigone's action as "masculine", because in the ancient world it was a woman's established duty to bury the dead, and the blood-relationship of siblings was considered closer than any other. When confronted with a violation of divine law, even those outside the power structure, by being disobedient; the distinguished legal scholar David Daube compares Antigone's case with that of the midwives' disobedience in Exodus 1:15ff, when Pharaoh orders them to kill all male babies immediately upon delivery. When Creon is angry because Antigone's disobedience has made it appear that he has been ruled by a woman, he reveals how little he understands of the real issues before him; but it is the question whether god or man can make laws, and the conflict of man against female, that is the central issue of the play.

It seems then that the only "culture" that Heilbrun and Millet have examined in detail is our own culture, and in discussing antiquity they are merely applied the concerns of our time to the past. Perhaps it's fair to say that they have not made much of an advance on the history lesson offered to students at Princess Ida's college by Lady Psyche. She (you remember) presented "A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious past", ie, offered a survey in which she describes events in summary and out of context: the legendary Amazons, Lycian matriarchy, customs - both from Asia Minor; Thracian and Cypriot from Rome; women's status in Greek, Roman, Persian, Chinese, Indian, the age of chivalry, to the present when "commenced the dawn", and she concluded with a prophecy of the future, and full equality for women. That Tennyson was able so accurately to project what would happen is more frightening than surprising; classical oratory provides ready models of how to write history selectively to prove a point or stir up emotions. Tennyson makes it clear that emotion is involved in every aspect of academic discourse at Princess Ida's college, and that the faculty are more like clergy than professors in their desire to convert and to retain a group of the faithful.

Using the present to reconstruct a false past is just one of the problems

inherent in the assumption that women's history is a special discipline. In the process of recovering events and of endowing them with a significance they in fact never had, Lady Psyche and her followers seem to have assumed that because they are women they are competent to assess the fate of other women in all of history and all over the world. I hope that my discussion of the Amazons and matriarchy has shown that being a woman does not give Millet a significant advance over Bachofen: the one skill that might have helped her she had no time to acquire, that is, knowledge of Greek. Heilbrun in her remarks on the *Antigone* points up another problem. The claim has frequently been made that women's studies are run more democratically than men's; it has seemed appropriate in order to compensate for past deprivations to allow full discussion and expression to all participants. The process is well illustrated in another work by Heilbrun, *The Theban Mysteries*, which she wrote under the name of Amanda Cross. There she describes a seminar conducted by her heroine Kate Fansler, Professor of English at Columbia, at a famous girl's school in the most fashionable area of New York (it is in fact her Alma Mater and mine, the Brearley); the class is discussing the *Antigone*; everyone has a say, allusions to English writers abound; "No harm", says Fansler, "in comparing the *Antigone* to anything you want, if you think the comparison isn't superficial." But is the student in a position to know how superficial she is being, and how could a comparison help but be superficial when no one thinks it necessary to refer to the text, even in English?

Apparently no one asks (or answers) these questions because everyone at the school (except the Latin department, who have not been consulted) appears to be delighted with the seminar: the students are involved; they do twice as much work as usual; they have even begun improvising the *Antigone* in their drama class. As so often in America, academic success appears to be measured primarily by popularity.

The continuing appeal of Bachofen's theory derives from its putting the blame for women's loss of power on to male conspiracy, envy and ignorance; accordingly, by imitating, most men, most women, and all the recent revivals of their work, back to the full texts of the sources they cite partially, and also to the kind of documentation Bachofen and Heilbrun did not consider at all. The social documents that will tell us most about the real status of women are to be found in places that few standard ancient history courses until very recently considered: grave-stones, boundary markers, wills, marriage contracts, mostly found in inscriptions and papyri; most are untranslated, most more specialising in to read, much cataloguing still needs to be completed. Studies of these documents in the last decade have begun to show how mistaken we are if we try to derive our picture of the ancient world exclusively from literary documents, especially dramas

In the feminine gender

By Hermione Lee

MARGARET CROSLAND:
Beyond the Lighthouse
English Women Novelists in the Twentieth Century
260pp; Constable, £7.50
0 09 462410 0

If Mrs Nickleby had had occasion to write a book, it might have come out something like this erratic, scatterbrained survey. Margaret Crosland makes a passionate (and welcome) case for two undervalued writers: Dorothy Richardson and Christina Stead, and deals affectionately with some little-known regional and historical novelists (you've heard of Naomi Mitchison, but did you know about D. K. Broderick?) But the selection is a haphazard mix. Stevie Smith is missing, only three of Katherine Mansfield's stories are referred to, Ivy Compton-Burnett is summed up largely on the basis of *Mother and Son*, a lone and inferior example; is provided "Elizabeth Bowen's stories" (*The Tree Trunk*) there is a patchy account of Iris Murdoch, and Beryl Bainbridge is discussed without any reference to *Quilver*. L. P. Hartley, throughout neglected, apart from a brief mention of the re-reading of Christina Stead, to draw attention to Virginia's edi-

he recognized, and then, as if by magic, she will join men in running the world. Bachofen's myth now seems to have inspired a new feminist pseudo-scholarship, which one is entitled to practise first by virtue of being a woman and then by criticizing history and literary criticism as traditionally written, and finally by restoring to importance what men had ignored in the past. But to judge from what I have seen of Millet's or Heilbrun's treatment of the classics, I expect that such "new, feminist" criticism (I can't call it scholarship) will get us exactly where it got Lady Psyche and Princess Ida.

How can we (the writers of women's history) avoid getting nowhere? There has been much talk recently of inventing new myths, or of at least rewriting the old ones. Lady Psyche even suggests this, in Gilbert's parody of Tennyson, the comic opera *Princess Ida*. Heilbrun, in her most recent book *Reinventing Womanhood*, proposes that through a new reading and adaptation of the *Oresteia* "women must join in dismantling... the motherhood mystique"; there must now be a female Orestes, not literally of course; but getting rid of patriarchal motherhood (not mother) is a necessary preliminary (or if you like, initiation rite) for reconstituting the family on a more equal basis. Heilbrun acknowledges that her version "is not what the play said to the Greeks"; the issue she emphasizes, the "Mystique of Motherhood", is distinctively twentieth-century American, a product of a reaction, both by men and women, to a past when women were leaders and pioneers. But if we don't ask how the Greeks felt (to the extent that we can find out), how shall we ever understand why women are portrayed as they are in those dramas?

To understand (and teach) women's history we need to get beyond the stage of reaction, ie, past Bachofen and Jane Harrison, and all the recent revivals of their work, back to the full texts of the sources they cite partially, and also to the kind of documentation Bachofen and Heilbrun did not consider at all. The social documents that will tell us most about the real status of women are to be found in places that few standard ancient history courses until very recently considered: grave-stones, boundary markers, wills, marriage contracts, mostly found in inscriptions and papyri; most are untranslated, most more specialising in to read, much cataloguing still needs to be completed. Studies of these documents in the last decade have begun to show how mistaken we are if we try to derive our picture of the ancient world exclusively from literary documents, especially dramas

or law cases, which portray the breakdown of normal life rather than its routine. In the fifth and fourth centuries BC, Athenian members of Athenian families wished to be buried near each other, even when necessary moving established graves; in the fourth century details of their affection and relationship were described. Strong ties existed not only between mother and daughter but between husband and wife. Epic and drama themselves have much to tell us about normal relationships, if we look closely at what the characters say rather than simply at the main lines of mythic conflict. Upper-class women in all periods and places in the Greek world had opportunity to be educated; if they did not voice dissatisfaction even in Rome, where women owned and managed property, perhaps they saw certain advantages in the status quo, such as protection and mutual trust. Lower-class women and women slaves lived in many respects the same kinds of life as men, with set occupations and professions, some sex-segregated, but fewer than we might have expected.

Once the study of women goes beyond protest, as many of our courses surely now do, we can begin to initiate the second stage of the women's movement. The explanation of women's status will not be as easy to establish as Bachofen thought, and it may take several generations seriously to establish it, even for one small portion of the world's history, as in ancient Greece and Rome. In order properly to evaluate these new findings, comparison must constantly be made with the status of men in the same period and country and equivalent social class. If I were asked what statues to put in front of our library, I would not choose goddesses like Hestia and Athena, abstract paragons of what one can do if one is immortal, ageless, infinitely powerful; I would not pick Amazons, either, or the equally non-existent Lycian matriarchy, or even the swimmer Clelia from Rome's mythic past. I would like to see some women Lady Psyche apparently never heard of: the poet Erinna, composer of the epic poem *The Distaff*, about the death of a female friend; Hipparchia the philosopher, who travelled round lecturing with her husband, Crates; Menophila of Sardis, who was honoured by her city for being clever (she is shown with a book) and being a leader. Certainly they were unusual, but they did exist which we might not have guessed had we judged from accounts of women in myth. From now we can learn about them and people like them, the better able we will be to understand what women can achieve.

tions of almost all the novelists under discussion. They do not even find their way into the bibliography.

This sloppy approach is not helped by a style which seems to have been pulled backwards through a mangle. There's no very cogent idea, either of whether it is possible to pin down what Virginia Woolf (reviewing Dorothy Richardson) called "the psychological sentence of the feminine gender". Remarks to the effect that only a woman could have had the patience to write *The Waves*, or that Nadine Gordimer has the "courage and sensitivity" which women "seem to possess by natural law", don't persuade one of the value of considering women writers in this way as a distinct species. There may be a better case even now, for grouping or comparing writers according to their class, background, methods, preoccupations and beliefs, rather than according to their sex.

Margaret Barrow's *Women 1870-1928: A select guide to printed and archival sources in the British Isles* (249pp, Mansell, £25, 0 7201 0923 X) seeks to remedy "the lack of a general guide to sources of information relating to women". The volume is arranged in four sections. "Archives" lists "Printed Works", "Non-book Material", and "Libraries and Record Offices", and is furnished with author, title and subject indexes.

The making of me

By Phyllis Grosskurth

JOHN PILLING:
Autobiography and Imagination
Studies in Self-Scrutiny
178pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£10.50.
0 7100 0730 2

After reading it twice, I must confess candidly that while I think I have an idea of what John Pilling is talking about in parts of *Autobiography and Imagination*, his over-all thesis continues to elude me. His point of departure is disagreement with Herbert Read and Roy Pusek. Read can soon be disposed of, with his silly complaint that no category of literature is so poor in masterpieces as autobiography. All Mr Pilling needs to do in his case is to list Augustine, Cellini, Rousseau, Chateaubriand, et al.

A book like Pascal's *Design and Truth* in *Autobiography* proves more intractable. "Increasingly", Pilling tells us, "it has come to be realized that Pascal's analysis is less fool-proof than it looks and is in need of some remedial attention." But he never tells us what form Pascal's analysis takes, and his remarks impelled me to re-read it for myself. What I found was that Pascal makes an energetic attempt to define autobiography as involving "the reconstruction of the movement of a life, in the actual circumstances in which it was lived. Its centre of interest is the self, not the outside world, though necessarily the outside world must appear so that, in give and take with it, the personality finds its peculiar shape". A very good definition, I would have thought; but Pilling's dismissal of Pascal's book as mere "notes towards a definition" is a cunning way of avoiding the kind of direct confrontation that would force him into a definition of his own.

What he has done is to select the autobiographies of certain modern writers - Henry James, Henry Adams, Yeats, Pasternak, Michel Leiris, Nabokov, Henry Green and Adrian Stokes - all of whom have been fascinated by the dynamics of imagination. Pilling's method, so he says, is to treat these autobiographical works as self-contained entities. What this amounts to is a discussion of various books which were chosen, it would appear, simply because he thought it would be interesting to talk about them. The "remedial attention" that needed to be applied to Pascal's book seems to have been overlooked.

But an intense concentration on books which Pilling himself confesses are not "easy of access" makes for difficult reading. This is the sort of "explication de texte" in which the writer is really murmuring aloud to himself, "yes, if one's ears are sharp enough, one catches a coherent line of thought. The great difficulty for the reader is that Pilling's commentary is like a palimpsest; one needs the text open in front of one in order to follow his exposition, and even then he tends to abandon it in pursuit of other trains of thought.

Since he insists that each section of the book is self-contained, I decided to concentrate my straggling thoughts on two of the writers who seem distanced from each other in every possible way. Henry Adams and Adrian Stokes.

Adams' ostensible reason for writing an account of his life was to prevent its distortion by a later biographer. I have always been somewhat curious about this explanation, as well as about his ideal of "amplification of self" to which Pilling alludes. It implies that he considered himself sufficiently important for a future biographer to want to write about him. Furthermore, the objectification of himself as a third-person protagonist was surely a form of ironic attitudinizing which only served to draw attention to the narrator. Pilling approaches *The Education of Henry Adams* through the book's form, a reasonable enough way to re-create its structure, but what happens

meanwhile to its subject? Does not even an Adams bleed? Do we not learn as much about Adams through his deliberate exclusion of his wife's suicide as we do about Ruskin in his avoidance of reference to his marriage in *Proteritina*? Fascinating as it is to analyse the formal structure of the book, is it not a little like wandering through an empty mansion, echoing and desolate for want of an occupant?

Pilling has added two appendices to his book, devoted to Henry Green and Adrian Stokes. They are relegated to this position apparently because the English don't generally like autobiographies, and because the authors in question have "transformed themselves as subjects into themselves as objects". More than Henry Adams did? Pilling feels it necessary to give us an explanation of why he has written about Stokes; not, it would appear because Stokes is developing into a cult figure, but because he agrees with Richard Wolfheim that Stokes' autobiographical writings contain "representations, unexcelled in our literature, of the artist and the aesthete in the making", and because Stokes has employed imaginative strategies "that are part of a pervasive tendency in the literature of self-scrutiny in this century". I am not sure what Pilling means by these strategies, unless he thinks that modern autobiographical writing is pervaded by psychoanalytical concepts, which is highly questionable. According to Pilling, "The interest of 'Inside Out', even for a reader who knows nothing of psychoanalysis, resides in Stokes' purposeful but never purely rational elaboration of a mental life."

I am not clear whether by "a reader who knows nothing of psychoanalysis" Pilling means himself but he is certainly quite mistaken in what he thinks Freud meant by "a Family Romance". His close reading of *Inside Out*, however, makes this the most coherent chapter of the book. Stokes had been analysed by Melanie Klein for several years before writing his autobiography, and his understanding of how and why he viewed the world as he did, and his belief that certain infantile fantasies had directed him towards art, are both fascinating and plausible. He recalls his childhood through the terrors which he projected into Hyde Park and the gradual attainment of repugnance, achieved through recognition of the beauties of Kensington Gardens. Later his imagination expanded in the wider world of Italy, ultimately coming to rest in contemplation of Cézanne's paintings, undistorted and serene in their own right.

By not venturing beyond a close paraphrase of *Inside Out*, and by avoiding any psychoanalytical interpretations of his own, Pilling has written an essay that deserves better than its relegation here to an Appendix.

Criminal constructions

By Patricia Craig

HANNA CHARNEY:
The Detective Novel of Manners: Hedonism, Morality, and the Life of Reason
125pp. Associated University Presses.
£16.50.
0 8386 3004 9

On pages 3, 4 and 5 of this work Hanna Charney considers the sentence "There must be some explanation for the disappearance of the cucumber." She found it in a detective novel by V. C. Clinton-Baddeley, where it occurs in a book the hero picks up from his bedside table. It amuses him, as it is meant to amuse the reader: it is the lightest of playful touches. In Hanna Charney's hands, however, it gains a great deal of unnatural weight. She considers it as a leitmotif-sentence and explores it (she tells us) on its literal level (as a statement of truth), and on its metaphorical level (as it expresses themes of the novel). Each word of the sentence is stressed in turn: "There must be some explanation: must and 'explanation' define each other." (Do they? To what precise purpose?) Truly, there is not much comic flavour left about that cucumber by the time the author has finished with it. It is served up as a portion of stodge.

On page 15 a conclusion is reached: "the detective is not trying to prove that the victim is dead; this is established empirically". We might wonder if this is really a profitable observation. Did we need to have it stated so particularly? But it soon becomes clear that Hanna Charney doesn't shrink from generalized comment. Quoting two lines from a very bland, once-popular song from Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew*

Too Much - "Que sera, sera, / Whatever will be, will be" - she remarks boldly, "this... gives a due to the time orientation of detective fiction". What does she mean? "Whatever will be, will be", she adds shortly, "might be complemented by another law: 'whatever was, was'." Might be? Law? Actually, to draw an analogy between "Que sera, sera" and the simple backwards-and-forwards movement in the detective game seems - to quote Dr Charney's remark about another matter - "fortuitous, arbitrary, highly unacademic, and sad".

It was George Grella who described the detective story as a comedy of manners, in a very perceptive, detailed and cogent essay ("The Formal Detective Novel"). This gives Dr Charney her title, but not her subject: neither manners nor manner receives much attention here. Her concern is solely with form and structure, and this produces a fair number of statements of limited insight. "The sentence at large presents an active danger to the other characters." (Yes, well.) It also leads to an inelegant prose style, with referential models, norms and reality principles to the fore. In the later chapters, however, the critical tactic becomes a little less rigid; there are indications that Dr Charney might have had some valuable points to make, if she hadn't gone in for such laborious examination of the basic structural elements of the genre. Her views on Maigret and Father Brown, for instance (the solution tends to produce an understanding that is coloured by charity and tolerance: "human" on Maigret's side, Christian and godly on Father Brown's), reach the brink of discernment. But the study, bare of social analysis, innocent of irony, indifferent to atmosphere, creates the impression of having been undertaken as a rather perverse literary exercise: a diligent search for the most roundabout approach to the obvious.

Selves and societies

By Charles Madge

J. P. WARD:
Poetry and the Sociological Idea
242pp. Brighton: Harvester. £20.
0 85527 363 1

I can say from practical experience that sociology and poetry do not sit easily together. J. P. Ward has written brilliantly about their incompatibility. With degrees in English from Toronto and Cambridge, and a degree in sociology from the University of Wales, he is well prepared academically for the task.

He begins by distinguishing five main types of sociology: "grand theory" or macro-sociology; social interactionism; social phenomenology; social anthropology; and Marxism. However he uses the term "social anthropology" to mean community studies and statistical surveys in the British empirical tradition, rather than the study of social structure by anthropological methods, which is its more usual meaning. He contrasts it with what he calls "anthropology proper", which thus becomes a sixth type of study, possibly not as incompatible with poetry as the other five.

What these five types of sociology have in common is the "sociological idea", which arose in the nineteenth century and has since, it is claimed, come to pervade all our thinking. Two central sections of the book deal with poetry before the sociological idea became dominant and with poetry since it became so. The five poets in the former category whom Ward discusses are Spenser, Donne, Milton, Pope and Wordsworth. He takes the bold and indeed hazardous step of treating each of these as antithetical to one of his five types of sociology.

Thus Spenser "can be shown in uncanny detail to evince a phenomenological view of the world", stressing the visual qualities of things, and their immediate apprehension. In Husserl's terminology, the imagery is "eidetic", but it is deliberately free from any "real social context". Similarly, Donne's love poetry is the antithesis of social interactionism: "For Donne, love is union. But union, by definition, cannot contain interaction." "Paradise Lost" offers an extraordinary parallel to Marxism, but its language, at least until after the Fall, is the language of metaphysical materialism rather than of secular social relationships. Pope, though he shares the "binary mind" of the sociological grand theorists of whom Talcott Parsons is the prime example, through his satire "collapses" his society, and so he too negates the sociological idea. Wordsworth is an interesting case, because "the conditions which released the Romantic poets into the world are the conditions which simulated the boundaries separating autobiography and fiction". But it fails to explore Isherwood's personality and the way this shapes and pours into his writings.

With so self-engrossed a writer, this constitutes a sizeable omission. Isherwood's talent has always had to struggle against narcissism. In a way, bigotry gave it most scope. Unhappily, in the 1930s, to talk about his homosexual life, he turned instead to what was going on around him: the resulting Berlin novels benefit from his mastery ability to record a time and place by focusing unerringly on the telling detail. Later, "I am a camera" gives way to "I am a self-projector". Self-absorption - something Isherwood protagonists regularly brood about - expands enormously. The author becomes his favourite subject: so that even *Kathleen and Frank*, supposedly a study of his parents, is, as Isherwood admits, chiefly about Christopher. Steered in their author's personal, these books are far more patently than those "brilliant" suggest - more interestingly human, too.

larly released sociology". A quotation from *The Prelude* suggests that the poet did at one time take the sociologists' road:

I summoned my best skill, and toiled
To anatomize the frame of social life;
Yea the whole body of society
Searched to its heart...
but that he gave up in the end:

Sick, wearied out with contraries,
His poetry draws its strength from "earth and stones and hills" and shows "a deeply disturbed attitude to kinship" and a negative response to community.

In the section on poetry since the rise of the sociological idea, Ward distinguishes three strategies put up by poets in self-defence against the social. There are those, like Mallarmé, Wallace Stevens and Yeats, who aim at producing "pure" poetry, "the poem itself". There are those, like Eliot and Pound, who, while concerned with social matters, write about them in terms of civilization and history. And there are, finally, those like Hardy, John Berryman and Sylvia Plath, whose poetry is "an espousal of death", all too literally so in the last two cases.

About all these poets Ward writes with assurance and insight, and when we come to the end of what is a relatively short book, we may well feel that he has made his point with room and to spare. His statements are categorical, whether dealing with poetry or with sociology, and at times I suspect he goes too fast and too far. To give an example from sociology, he says, and rightly, that he cannot possibly try to summarize two immensely long and abstract works by Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action* and *The Social System*. However what he does report about these books is incomplete and, in one instance, untrue. He makes no mention of the lengthy, and surely relevant, Chapter Nine in the latter work on "Expressive symbols and the social system: the communication of affect", in which Parsons writes about "the love relationship" and the emergence and role of the artist. In another place, Ward writes: "It is remarkable that Parsons provides not one physical illustration of what he is saying in the entire 550 pages of *The Social System*." But this ignores another lengthy chapter, "Social Structure and Dynamic Process: The Case of Modern Medical Practice", explicitly intended by Parsons to "help the reader to appreciate the empirical relevance of his abstract analysis".

Again, of T. S. Eliot, Ward writes: "As far as I know, he certainly never quoted, and hardly read, a sociological work." This is an exaggeration; he did read such works, those of Karl Mannheim, for example, to whom he refers in *Notes Toward a Definition of Culture*, where he also styles himself a sociobiologist. I remember him telling me, with a certain fraternal complicity, that he had a sister in New York who was a sociologist. As early as 1934, in *After Strange Gods*, he has a footnote on social as distinct from economic classes, and another citing V. A. Demant, *God, Man and Society*. And in 1922, in the Notes to *The Waste Land*, after saying how much he owes to Jessie Weston's book on the Grail, he goes on: "To another work of anthropology I am indebted, a general one which has influenced our generation profoundly: I mean *The Golden Bough*." Even if Frazer's majestic work is ranked by Mr Ward as anthropology rather than sociology, Eliot's statement of indebtedness deserved a mention.

All the same, this is a brilliant and original book.

Jules Michelet the historian was dismissed from his professorship at the Collège de France in 1851 for refusing to take an oath of allegiance to Louis Napoleon. While in exile in the country he wrote books of natural history, one of which, *The Bird*, has just been re-issued in paperback in a facsimile of an edition published in 1879 which contains 210 delightful illustrations by Glacemell (350pp. Wildwood House. £4.50. 0 7045 0444 8).

Down to brass tacks

By J. S. Bratton

Money
The Other Place, Stratford

Edward Bulwer, as he then was (the peerage came thirty years later), was already the most popular novelist of his day when he began to think of writing plays in 1893. He was also an M.P. He was therefore in a position to summon Macready, the leading actor of the times, to his chambers. Macready, for his part, recorded in his diary that he found the great man "dressed, or rather *deshabillé*, in the most lamentable style of loppety... his hair, whiskers, tuft, etc., all grievously cared for." He "felt deep regret to see a man of such noble and profound thought" so petty self-conscious. Their respective poses, the image of extreme fashion adopted by Bulwer on the strength of his literary and public successes, and the platitudes of rightness and respectability often voiced by Macready to offset the fact that he was a mere player, are pitifully related to the subject of their final collaboration, the comedy *Money*, now revived by the RSC at The Other Place.

The play concerns the inheritance of one of the many English fortunes made in India. Of the men in the family assembled in Act 1 to hear the will, only the poor relation, Alfred Evelyn, shows no cupidity, and he of course inherits. The further complications of the plot rest on his choice of a bride and the lengths to which he is driven to determine whether he is loved for himself or for his money. In 1840, when the piece was first produced, and during the many years of its continued success, the question of what makes a gentleman, whether his demeanour may compensate for or merely disguise the origins of his fortune - whether, indeed, wealth, worth, birth or occupation constitute gentility - were crucial in the lives of the middle-class audience as well as of those who provided their entertainment.

The possibility of mistake and deception inherent in such questions is essentially dramatic, and social comedy, from the Jacobean city play to the TV sitcom, draws its life from the changing social pressures in the world of its audience. Times of rapid change like the early decades of nineteenth century provoke bursts of such writing, and it may be only lingering prejudices against the Victorian drama that has confined our interest in social comedy of that date to its manifestations in the novel. Revivals like this one, and the RSC's earlier success with *London Assurance*, demonstrate that at least some playwrights shared the concerns of Jane Austen and Dickens.

Bulwer and Boucicault, both drawing on theatrical models reaching back to Ben Jonson, were nevertheless writing about their contemporary world. In the planning for this play Bulwer relied: the play bristles with the accurate detail of financial methods, and with the realistic representation of the current practice in the London gambling clubs. As he wrote, the crisis of middle-class manners and morals - on the one hand self-satisfied and expansionist, on the other exclusive and self-defensive - was reaching a peak. Hypocrites, snobs, prigs, adventurers, smiles and self-made men and Thackerayan seediness rattled about together as part of an ever-increasing mob of people with money to spend, but uncertain of how to spend it so as to secure the status of a gentleman. Extremes of behaviour were common, and they provided Bulwer with an array of "humorous" characters for this play - Lord Glossmore, Captain Smith, Mr Graves - who all illustrate various ways of making money, respectable or otherwise, and then

using it to procure status and esteem. Even the exaggerated sensibility and sense of honour which afflict his hero and heroine, and almost lead to their fatal separation, are not without precedent in the real love relationships of some of his contemporaries, as Mark Girouard's exploration of the Victorian version of Courtly Love has recently shown.

This is not to say that they all succeed as characterizations. The comfortably melancholic Graves is a safe comic type, and on his compromise between his "sainted Maria" (in heaven) and the charming Lady Franklin (in more immediate proximity) much traditional comic business may hang. He and Lady Franklin have some of the best lines in the play, none the worse for being obviously in direct descent from Shakespeare via Congreve. Miriam Karlin's Lady Franklin is brisk, even occasionally caustic. Her earthy good sense is the more welcome because Arthur Evelyn, the hero, apparently conceived as an inverted Timon (in the original text he was even provided with a group of sycophantic tradesmen on whom to vent his spleen), is muffled by Bulwer's fatal inclination to write fustian. Macready came to hate the role, calling it that of "a damned walking gentleman", and despite our stock of good will towards energetic young men in black frock coats, Nickleby-style, the verbosity with which he points the moral of the world's behaviour towards him before and after he comes into a fortune becomes very trying. One is tempted to see his incessant self-examination, and his inability to allow us to take the point of the action for ourselves, as proceeding from his author's insecurities, social as well as dramatic.

With their usual avoidance of pretension, and concentration on the stage itself, the company at The Other Place offer only a brief and rather impatient programme note on the play, suggesting none of the possible justifications for its revival. Consciousness of the comedy's significance in its time is shown only in their attention to period accuracy of visual effect and reference. This extends from detail of costume and props - the top Sir Frederick Blount's blond curls and whiskers, for example, which are the mark of the heavy swell as portrayed by the *Lions Comiques* of the Victorian stage - to the set itself, which is a study in brass carpet-lamps and red plush chairs, the small currency of early Victorian house-furnishing elegantly evoking its ponderous elegance, arranged in a fluent formal design perfect as a background and as a playing area. The scene changes, originally conceived for the elaborate resources of the Haymarket, are managed wittily by the addition of funkeys for Evelyn's extravagant housekeeping on coming into his fortune, and low-slung lamps for the famous gambling scene in Crookford, when he pretends to have lost it.

It is less possible to find a way of translating the often mechanically formal stage conventions upon which Bulwer relied: the play bristles with the accurate detail of financial methods, and with the realistic representation of the current practice in the London gambling clubs. As he wrote, the crisis of middle-class manners and morals - on the one hand self-satisfied and expansionist, on the other exclusive and self-defensive - was reaching a peak. Hypocrites, snobs, prigs, adventurers, smiles and self-made men and Thackerayan seediness rattled about together as part of an ever-increasing mob of people with money to spend, but uncertain of how to spend it so as to secure the status of a gentleman. Extremes of behaviour were common, and they provided Bulwer with an array of "humorous" characters for this play - Lord Glossmore, Captain Smith, Mr Graves - who all illustrate various ways of making money, respectable or otherwise, and then

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But perhaps the difficulty lies not so much in managing the mechanism of the play, for it works well enough on its comic and satirical levels, even

when we find it uncomfortable, as in the weakness, already remarked, of Bulwer's attempt to underline the play's meaning by scenes and characters which demand emotional responses but find no means to convince us of their reality, because they lack a serious dramatic language. In this, of course, Macready's expertise could not supply Bulwer's deficiencies, and a modern audience, still responsive to jokes about love and money, is sceptical about bombast on these subjects. Bulwer had too great a sense of his own importance, as moralist and as Reviver of the Drama, and so his plays do not stand up as sturdily as those of his more practical contemporaries like Boucicault and Pinero; but he has always been fortunate in his theatrical collaborators, from Macready to the RSC, and their parts in this production make it very well worth while.

Voznesensky performs

By Carol Rumens

After sixteen years, Andrei Andreevich Voznesensky was back in London on November 8 to read his poems and, as he told us, test the reactions of a modern audience against those of our 1960s predecessors. Had our souls been hardened by the rule of the Iron Maiden? We waited anxiously to find out what stuff we were made of.

Voznesensky's test piece was "I am Goya", wrongly announced as "Nostalgia for the Present" by Edward Fox, who read the translation. It seemed to set a precedent for the rest of the evening. Fox evidently not having reckoned on any deviation from the predestined running-order, "I am very sorry, it is my fault," said Voznesensky humbly, almost in a whisper, before launching into his first crescendo of the evening. He stopped shouting; we applauded courteously. Voznesensky stepped back and surveyed us. He made some remark I couldn't quite catch - something about our being a "cool country". I had a sneaking suspicion that he'd decided to fail us.

The reading (but of course it was not a "reading" in the English sense of poets staggering on stage laden with printed matter and proceeding to bury their heads in it) - the performance, rather, began with a note from the predestined running-order. Voznesensky, a kind of Voznesensky, bravely abandoning metaphor, called Mr Fox "a very great actor". At the end of the evening he repeated this opinion, only it now sounded as if he said "She is a very great actor". It was impossible to tell if Voznesensky was muddling his grammar or trying to make us laugh. The evening had, in fact, been punctuated by nervous ripples of laughter, not always in appropriate places. We British like to be amused, and we were not going to let a Russian poet stand in our way.

Voznesensky, though a graying, snarling, dressy, well-fed, forty-seven-year-old still considers himself to be a child of the 1960s. His most recent book, *Nostalgia for the Present*, shows him to have undergone a rather touching and boisterous love affair with the America of the Beats and the Berkeley drop-outs. The poem-play "Under Full Sail", included in this collection, has now been turned into a rock opera; apparently one of its tunes reached number one in the Russian charts. A sample of one of the ditties was wailed rustily across the Round House amplifiers on Sunday night - a pleasant enough tune, though the sentiments seemed not to amount to much more than a kind of Russian "All you need is love". Voznesensky has been reported as saying that the story (featuring an ill-starred romance between a gallant Russian soldier-ambassador and a Spanish girl from San Francisco, set during the empire-building days of Catherine the Great) is better than *Romeo and Juliet*; and that it's all true.

How to place Voznesensky as a poet by British analogy? He is certainly more of an Adrian Mitchell than a Peter Porter or a Geoffrey Hill. He is unsophisticated. He likes grandiose concepts and deals with them in a sometimes facile way; phrases like "pornography of the mind" are hammered accusingly home, without the least attempt to define them. Sometimes he gets hooked on an "insight" that becomes tedious on repetition: "man does not live by sky alone", for example. Undoubtedly he has a flair for the striking image. Pasternak (his great hero) is compared, as he lies in his coffin, to a man rowing a boat; the snow-white buttresses of a church "bend to the pond, drinking water like horses". The strong rhythms of a poem like "Do not Forget" come over powerfully in the Russian. They are almost lost in translation, and a reader with no Russian must wonder how much more of Voznesensky is lost in this way. Poets like Robert Lowell were among his admirers. Critics have called him an experimental and, at times, surrealist writer. The English-American versions contain little evidence either of this or of his famous craftsmanship.

As a performer, Voznesensky is impressive. In Russia, he has no trouble in filling those stadia that for English poets possess such a tantalizingly mythic quality. He seems to have a genuine, generous, popular touch. To the authorities he is the just-about acceptable face of rebellion. For a time he was out of favour for supporting the protest of the "Metropoli" group of writers and artists against censorship. "My country has terrible problems," he states flatly in "The Russian Intelligentsia". "But also prophets who can see." He can be a sharper critic than he implies, but he is not a political animal. When he cries that "the literature of Russia conducts civil war" he is merely thought to be uttering the threats of a 1960s-style idealist, towards whom his elders can afford to be indulgent. He argues against philistinism in a language as simple and loud enough for even the philistines to understand. That is probably why they forgive him.

A licensed exporter of "the Russian soul", or some such cultural commodity, Voznesensky does not nearly match the range and brilliance of a poet like Brodsky. But the freedom he represents is a real if limited one, and the power of his words lies perhaps in their ability to talk to, and therefore about, the mass of ordinary Russian people who are neither dissidents nor war-mongers. A Voznesensky poem speaks for them more truly, perhaps, than a submarine or a Solzhenitsyn.

A mechanical Machiavelli

By Gámini Salgado

Favours
Northcott Theatre, Exeter

When Frances Howard, egged on by the tightly-knit group of politically motivated men and women who formed the Howard clan, married the Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, the son of Elizabeth's favourite, she was thirteen and he fourteen. Seven years later she went through a second marriage with King James's castmate Robert Carr, Viscount Rochester, Earl of Somerset. Both ceremonies took place amid scenes of great splendour. Jonson wrote a masque for one and Campion for the

other, and both were costumed and staged by Inigo Jones. At both the presiding spirit was King James himself.

The passage from one marriage to the next was not without stumbling blocks. As the Bishop of Lichfield said at the time, "there were not more eyes upon the earl's father losing his head than now upon the earl losing his wife". The bishop was one of the members of a commission of inquiry to decide whether Frances's marriage to Essex could be nullified on the ground of the latter's impotence. Other members included the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lancelot Andrews. The question of the bride's virginity was, of course, directly relevant to that of the Earl's impotence and was closely looked into by the commissioners. One man who was peculiarly well placed to give an opinion on the first matter was Sir Thomas Overbury, writer, aspiring politician and secretary and friend of Robert Carr. But Overbury was not available for interview. He had been imprisoned in the Tower by the Privy Council on a charge of contempt towards the king, and died there in mysterious circumstances.

Duncan Forbes's new play is concerned with the events leading up to the marriage between Carr and Frances Howard and the death of Overbury. Both bride and bridegroom were subsequently found guilty of conspiracy to murder Sir Thomas, but the play stops short of that sequel. The opening scenes are set in and around the palace of Whitehall, and the later ones in Overbury's cell in the Tower. The principal players in this macabre pageant are Carr and Overbury, the King and Queen, Lady Frances and the procurers who aided and abetted her, Anne Turner. The theatrical terms arise quite naturally, for it is that aspect of the whole affair which has engaged Forbes's imagination. The play is built out of a series of short compact scenes, each one moving into and out of position on an ingeniously devised sliding floor. The language is a continuously lively mixture of modern slang and Jacobean pastiche. The sententious rhymed couplets which punctuate scene endings and the parody of love sonnets are especially amusing, as is the scene where Queen Anne and Frances rehearse part of a masque, in which a pantomime dragon whose front half is Carr, with Sir Thomas bringing up the rear, defecates on the palace floor.

The trouble starts towards the second half, when the disguised Overbury has discovered the sexual cavortings of Carr first with the King and then with his bride to be, and has to pay the price for his opposition to the forthcoming marriage. We are asked, in the later scenes, to take an interest in the sufferings of Overbury very different from the detached and sardonic amusement invited by the earlier scenes and very largely incompatible with it. In the original script the play ended with Overbury's agonized death in the Tower, but the staged version shows a glittering tableau of King James delightedly cooing the now-reluctant bridal pair in yards of shining silk, the first spun by his newly-imported silk worms. The theatrical image is dazzling in every sense, but perhaps not finally appropriate to a monarch whose part in the affair was, on this showing, less Machiavellian than mechanical. Richard Mayes finds an appropriate and highly effective blend of coarse vigour and pedantic shrewdness for his Jane, while Anthony May as Overbury almost succeeds in the all but impossible task of moving from calculating courier to suffering tragic hero. Stewart Trotter's production gives us a short but briskly entertaining evening at the theatre, with brightly highland reels, well-tuned virginals and puns wine-making enough to be genuine late-Jacobean.